

May 2016
Volume 131 Number 3

PMLA

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

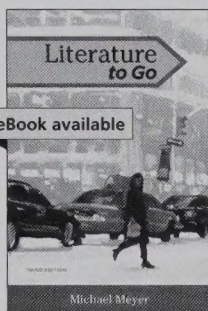
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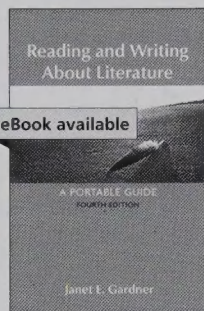
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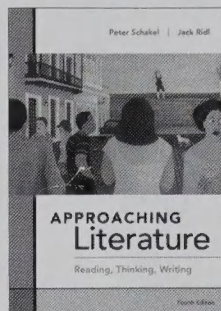
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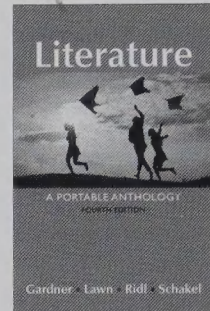
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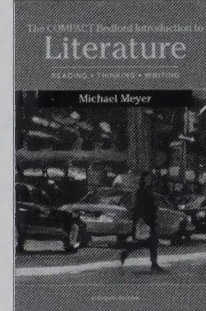
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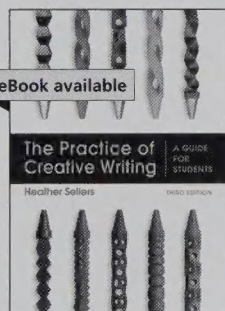
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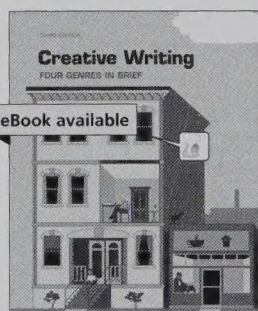
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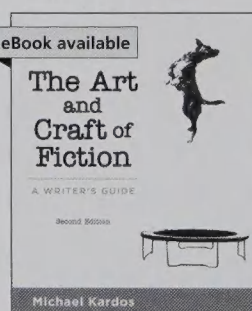
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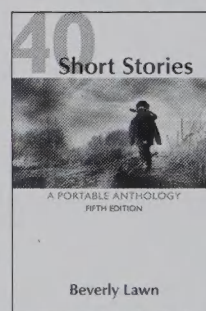
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May 2016

Volume 131 Number 3

PMLA

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

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[Organized 1883, Incorporated 1900]

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For libraries and other institutions, a subscription in 2016 to the electronic format of PMLA alone is \$200 and to the print and electronic formats is \$220 (domestic and Canadian) or \$250 (foreign). Subscriptions also include online access to the 2002–15 volumes. Agents deduct four percent as their fee. Claims for undelivered issues will be honored if they are received within six months of the publication date; thereafter the single-issue price will be charged. To order an institutional subscription, call or write the Member and Administrative Services Office of the association (646 576-5166; subscrip@mla.org).

Single copies of the January, March, May, and October issues can be purchased for \$12 each; the September (Program) issue is \$35. Issues for the current year and the previous one are available at the MLA Bookstore (www.mla.org/store/CID70) and from the Member and Administrative Services Office of the association (646 576-5161; bookorders@mla.org).

An online archive of PMLA issues from 1884 to 2010 is available through JSTOR (www.jstor.org).

Volumes up to 2000 can be obtained on microfilm from NA Publishing, Inc. (800 420-6272; info@napubco.com; napubco.com/periodicals-on-microform/).

The office of publication and editorial offices are located at 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434 (646 576-5000; pmlasubmissions@mla.org).

All communications concerning membership, including change-of-address notifications, should be sent to the Member and Administrative Services Office, MLA, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434 (646 576-5151; membership@mla.org). If a change of address also involves a change of institutional affiliation or a new e-mail address, that office should be informed of this fact at the same time.

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A Statement of Editorial Policy

PMLA welcomes essays of interest to those concerned with the study of language and literature. As the publication of a large and heterogeneous association, the journal is receptive to a variety of topics, whether general or specific, and to all scholarly methods and theoretical perspectives. The ideal *PMLA* essay exemplifies the best of its kind, whatever the kind; addresses a significant problem; draws out clearly the implications of its findings; and engages the attention of its audience through a concise, readable presentation. Manuscripts in languages other than English are accepted for review but must be accompanied by a detailed summary in English (generally of 1,000–1,500 words) and must be translated into English if they are recommended to the Editorial Board. Articles of fewer than 2,500 words or more than 9,000 words are not considered for publication. The word count includes notes but excludes works-cited lists and translations, which should accompany foreign language quotations. The MLA urges its contributors to be sensitive to the social implications of language and to seek wording free of discriminatory overtones.

Only members of the association may submit articles to *PMLA*. For a collaboratively written essay to be eligible for submission, all coauthors must be members of the MLA. *PMLA* does not publish book reviews or new works of fiction, nor does it accept articles that were previously published in any language. An article is considered previously published if it appears in print or in an online outlet with the traits of publication, such as editorial selection of content, a formal presentation, and ongoing availability. Online contexts that typically lack these traits include personal Web pages, discussion groups, and repositories. Each article submitted is sent to two reviewers, usually one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. Articles recommended by these readers are then sent to the members of the Editorial Board, who meet periodically with the editor to make final decisions. Until a final decision is reached, the author's name is not made known to consultant readers, to members of the Advisory Committee and the Editorial Board, or to the editor. Because the submission of an article simultaneously to more than one refereed journal can result in duplication of the demanding task of reviewing the manuscript, it is *PMLA*'s policy not to review articles that are under consideration by other journals. An article found to have been simultaneously submitted elsewhere will not be published in *PMLA* even if it has already been accepted for publication by the Editorial Board.

Submissions, prepared according to the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, should be sent electronically or, in duplicate, as hard copy to the Managing Editor, *PMLA*, Modern Language Association, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434 (pmlasubmissions@mla.org). With each print submission please include a self-addressed envelope and enough postage for one copy to be returned. Authors' names should not appear on manuscripts; instead, a cover sheet, with the author's name and address and the title of the article, should accompany each manuscript. Authors should not refer to themselves in the first person in the submitted

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Forthcoming in PMLA

IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE

Special Topic: Literature in the World Coordinated by Simon Gikandi

SIMON GIKANDI. "Introduction—
Another Way in the World"

ROBERT J. C. YOUNG. "That Which Is
Casually Called a Language"

FRANÇOISE LIONNET AND EMMANUEL
BRUNO JEAN-FRANÇOIS. "Literary
Routes: Migration, Islands, and the
Creative Economy"

TOBIAS WARNER. "How Mariama Bâ
Became World Literature: Trans-
lation and the Legibility of Feminist
Critique"

EMILY SETINA. "Marianne Moore's Postwar
Fables and the Politics of Indirection"

YASSER ELHARIRY. "f"

PHILIP JOSEPH. "The *Pícaro* at War:
Vernacular Language and Violent
Conflict in Grimmelshausen and
Saro-Wiwa"

TAYLOR EGGAN. "Regionalizing the
Planet: Horizons of the Introverted
Novel at World Literature's End"

IRENE SIEGEL. "The Poetics of the Frag-
ment and the Judeo-Arab-Muslim
Continuum: Edmond Amran El
Maleh's *Mille ans un jour*"

CARLOS ROJAS. "Language, Ethnicity,
and the Politics of Literary
Taxonomy: Ng Kim Chew and
Mahua Literature"

GREG FORTER. "Atlantic and Other
Worlds: Critique and Utopia in Post-
colonial Historical Fiction"

MEG ARENBERG. "The Digital *Ukumbi*:
New Terrains in Swahili Identity and
Poetic Dialogue"

Talks from the Convention

Essays by Anna Brickhouse and Harsha
Ram

Theories and Methodologies

Essays by Jane Hiddleston, Rajagopalan
Radhakrishnan, Subramanian Shan-
kar, Eric Hayot, Nirvana Tanoukhi,
Wail S. Hassan, Ronit Ricci, and
Grace Musila

(continued)

text or notes if such references would identify them; any necessary references to the author's previous work, for example, should be in the third person. If the contribution includes any materials (e.g., quotations that exceed fair use, illustrations, charts, other graphics) that have been taken from another source, the author must obtain written permission to reproduce them in print and electronic formats.

Features in PMLA

Manuscripts and correspondence related to the features described below should be sent to the Managing Editor, *PMLA*, Modern Language Association, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434 (pmlasubmissions@mla.org).

Special Topic

Articles on the general topic are invited; the subtopics listed are provided by way of example and suggestion only. Submissions to *PMLA* must meet the requirements given in the statement of editorial policy.

Cultures of Reading

Deadline for submissions: 7 November 2016

Coordinators: Evelyne Ender (Johns Hopkins Univ.) and Deidre Lynch (Harvard Univ.)

What diverse practices, desires, and norms are concealed by the too familiar gerund in this title? What culturally specific and historically contingent institutions and techniques shape individuals' encounters with their reading matter? Do those encounters serve ends beyond the decoding of meanings or the closing of a hermeneutic circle? Questions like these energize an emergent field of inquiry that involves, among others, literary critics, book historians, anthropologists, and scholars of religion.

The discipline of literary studies has a long-standing commitment to ideals of close and critical reading. As the scope of our discipline has broadened, however, so has our conception of what reading entails, inviting a new attentiveness to practices involving sociable groups as well as solitary individuals and to skimming and skipping as well as word-by-word analyses. These developments raise in turn historical or comparative questions. Consider, for example, the different assumptions about the relationship between verbal structures and mental states that inform the reading of scriptures, a novel, postings on *Facebook*, and an article in *PMLA*. A new readiness to explore

the physical, temporal, and spatial modalities of reading has led scholars to scrutinize the material conditions of this activity at a time when our reading matter appears on a screen as often as it does in a codex. Our understanding of reading has been altered as well by the fact that many researchers in the humanities now delegate to their computers the task of culling information from extensive data sets of machine-readable texts. Prompted by such rapid technological changes, our discipline is reexamining the long history of reading and of reading experiences. New ethnographies have shown meanwhile that there is much to learn from the close study not only of texts but also of traces, alphabets, typefaces, and other signifying systems constitutive of distinctive communities.

The *PMLA* Editorial Board invites essays that build on these explorations of reading as a plural activity and that consider readers and the social institutions of literacy in any period or cultural tradition. Potential contributors are encouraged to think about reading expansively—and to consider it as a social practice that enrolls the reader in textual communities or as an integral aspect of particular forms of subjectivity or of memory. Submissions may, for example, consider religious reading and the relation between devotional practice and modern notions of literacy as a human right and a tool of human emancipation. They might consider the times and spaces that reading demands and creates. Other topics might include the effects of reading in translation (i.e., across languages and cultures); sociable modes of reading (the book club); reading and manners, good and bad; reading and vocalization or recitation; the marks and other traces that readers leave behind them; accounts of physiologies and pathologies of reading (such as addiction to novels or comics); the reading practices of digital natives.

Criticism in Translation

MLA members are invited to submit to the *PMLA* Editorial Board proposals for translations. Articles, as well as chapters or sections of books that can function as independent units, will be considered. The originals may be in any language. Two types of proposals are welcome: (1) significant scholarship from earlier periods that has not lost its forcefulness and whose retrieval in English in *PMLA* would be a noteworthy event for a broad body of readers and (2) contemporary work of sufficient weight and potential influence to merit the attention of the field as a whole.

A member who wishes to make a proposal should first ascertain that no previous English translation exists. The proposer should then provide the managing editor with the following materials: (1) a photocopy of the original essay, (2) an extended summary of the entire essay in English, (3) an introductory statement of approximately 1,000 words, prepared in accordance with MLA style, that will be published with the essay if the essay

Forthcoming in *PMLA*

IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE (*continued*)

The Changing Profession

Essays by Akinwumi Adesokan, Raphael Dalleo, Elaine C. Freedgood, Gerald Prince, Jennifer Wallace, and Lois Parkinson Zamora

Correspondents at Large

Contributions by Hülya Adak, Meena Alexander, Nair Anaya, Sharanya Jayawickrama, Susan Nalugwa Kiguli, Amy K. Levin, Terri Ochiagha, Meg Samuelson, Godwin Siundu, and Mark Williams

IN OTHER ISSUES

ELIZABETH BEARDEN. "Before Normal, There Was Natural: John Bulwer, Disability, and Natural Signing in Early Modern England and Beyond"

ERIC CALDERWOOD. "Franco Hajj: Moroccan Pilgrims, Spanish Fascism, and the Unexpected Journey of Modern Arabic Literature"

TAMMY CLEWELL. "Beyond Psychoanalysis: Resistance and Reparative Reading in Alison Bechdel's *Are You My Mother?*"

THOMAS C. CONNOLLY. "Primitive Passions, Blinding Visions: Arthur Rimbaud's 'Mystique' and a Tradition of Mystical Ekphrasis"

BEN GARCEAU. "Passing Over, Passing On: *Survivance* in the Translations of *Deor* by Seamus Heaney and J. L. Borges"

MELISSA GIRARD. "J. Saunders Redding and the 'Surrender' of African American Women's Poetry"

BENJAMIN D. HAGEN. "Feeling Shadows: Virginia Woolf's Sensuous Pedagogy"

RAY HORTON. "'Rituals of the Ordinary': Marilynne Robinson's Aesthetics of Belief and Finitude"

BERNHARD MALKMUS. "Man in the Anthropocene: Max Frisch's Environmental History"

ANNE MCCARTHY. "Reading the Red Bull Sublime"

RACHEL MESCH. "'O My Hero! O My Comrade in Arms! O My Fiancé!': Gender Crossing and Republican Values in Jane Dieulafoy's Fictions"

(*continued*)

Forthcoming in PMLA

IN OTHER ISSUES (*continued*)

- JOHN MILLER. "When Drama Went to the Dogs; or, Staging Otherness in the Animal Melodrama"
- RYAN NETZLEY. "Sameness and the Poetics of Nonrelation: Andrew Marvell's 'The Garden'"
- MARIE OSTBY. "Graphics and Global Dissent: Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Persian Miniatures, and the Multifaceted Power of Comic Protest"
- ANCA PARVULESCU. "Feminism in the Age of Queer Theory: The Question of Reproduction in Lee Edelman's *No Future* and J. M. Coetzee's *Slow Man*"
- PETER REMIEN. "Oeconomy and Ecology in Early Modern England"
- BENJAMIN A. SALTZMAN. "Secrecy and the Hermeneutic Potential in *Beowulf*"
- DAVID SQUIRES. "Roger Casement's Queer Archive"
- KYOKO TAKANASHI. "Sherlock's 'Brain Attic': Information Culture and the Liberal Professional Dilemma"
- MYKA TUCKER-ABRAMSON. "States of Salvation: *Wise Blood* and the Rise of the Neoliberal Right"
- TRISTRAM WOLFF. "That's Close Enough: The (Ongoing) History of Emotivism in Close Reading"

Little-Known Documents

- CHESTER HIMES. "On the Use of Force." Introduction by Diego Millan
- GEORGE MOSES HORTON. "Individual Influence." Introduction by Jonathan Senchyne
- OSIP MANDELSTAM. "The Wheat of Humanity." Introduction by Richard Lee Pierre
- "Gertrude Stein and Politics: 'Let Us Save China.'" Introduction and commentary by Birgit Van Puymbroeck
- SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER. Letters to Genevieve Taggard. Introduction by Laurel Harris

is accepted, (4) information on the copyright status of the original (if the translation is accepted for publication, the proposer will be responsible for obtaining permission to print it). In addition, if the proposer wishes to serve as translator of the essay or to designate a translator (who must also be an MLA member), a 1,000-word sample of the translation should be submitted; otherwise the Editorial Board will select a translator.

The translated essays should normally not exceed PMLA's 9,000-word limit. The Editorial Board will approve or decline the proposals, evaluate the quality of the translations, and cooperate with the proposers and translators.

Little-Known Documents

MLA members are invited to submit to the PMLA Editorial Board proposals regarding little-known documentary material that merits the attention of a broad range of readers. Consideration will be given to archival data from any period and in any language that do not exceed PMLA's 9,000-word limit.

A member who wishes to make a proposal should provide the managing editor with the following materials: (1) a photocopy of the document, (2) an extended summary of the document in English, (3) an introductory statement of approximately 1,000 words, prepared in accordance with MLA style, that will be published with the document if it is accepted, (4) information on the copyright status of the original (if the document is accepted for publication, the proposer will be responsible for obtaining permission to print it). In addition, if the document is not in English and if the proposer wishes to serve as translator or to designate a translator (who must also be an MLA member), the proposal should include a 1,000-word sample of the translation; otherwise the Editorial Board will select a translator of accepted non-English material. The Editorial Board will approve or decline the proposals.

Solicited Contributions

The editor and the Editorial Board periodically invite studies and commentaries by specific authors on topics of wide interest. These contributions appear in the following series: Theories and Methodologies, The Changing Profession, The Book Market, The Journal World, Letters from Librarians, and Correspondents at Large. MLA members are welcome to suggest topics that might be addressed under these rubrics.

Editor's Column

Reading at the Limits

AS AN UNDERGRADUATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, I DECIDED to “read” literature because I believed, perhaps naively, that this was a field of intellectual free play without the analytic limits set by the other fields I was considering, most notably law and philosophy. But arriving in graduate school in the United States in the early 1980s, I found myself in the middle of a cultural war in which the lines of battle were marked by centers and margins. I found myself in a department, university, state, and country in which literature, ordinarily dismissed as a soft discipline even in the humanities, had become pivotal in a bitter conflict over who belonged to a presumed center, the custodians of a Western civilization, quarantined from the threat of those consigned to margins, which were clearly defined in racial, ethnic, or other terms designed to exclude. Nothing in my experience had prepared me for this struggle between the assumed center and its margins. I had, after all, always defined myself in relation to centers—centers of culture, of literary texts, and, above all, of higher education—as sites for cultivating sweetness and light. Indeed, when the University of Nairobi nominated me for a British Council Fellowship to study at the University of Edinburgh, my teachers had concluded that I was ideally suited for what they saw as the imperative to study and understand the literatures and cultures of Europe in order to advance the project of decolonization. I was being sent out there to understand what constituted European knowledge and how this could be either affirmed or rejected in postcoloniality.

My teachers, all products of the colonial university, were operating under the belief, which had become almost a dictum in late colonialism, that understanding what made Europe different was an important step in displacing its logic. My *Bildung* would hence be the ambiguous adventure of the African trying to understand the

logic of European modernity—and the basis of its hegemony—in order to transcend it. The demand made on me by my teachers might as well have come out of Cheikh Hamidou Kane's novel *Ambiguous Adventure* (*L'aventure ambiguë*): "We must go to learn from them the art of conquering without being in the right" ("il faut aller apprendre chez eux l'art de vaincre sans avoir raison" [37; 47]). Now, in the United States, I was being told that there were texts—canonical texts—that belonged to a civilization that went under the name Western, and that because one belonged to this tradition through ancestral claims rather than education or achievement, I, even with my proper postcolonial education, was not part of it. My role, it seemed, was to name the margin and to be its voice.¹

Marginality did not, however, sit well with me, nor did the idea that people, including a former member of the Ku Klux Klan running for president at the time, could own a tradition just because of a dubious invocation of ancestry. Still, I was interested in the project of what would later be called the "provincialization" of Europe (Chakrabarty), and in order to justify the reading of European texts, a process that would lead to the writing of a PhD dissertation on Charles Dickens and ironic discourse, I had to address two urgent questions. First, there was the question of necessity: Did literature answer a need? How was it to be understood? Literature? The need?² Second, there was the question of reading: What would happen if the European text was read, not from its assumed center, or what Derrida would call its "controlled margin," but at the point where the book, as he puts it, "overflows and cracks its meaning"? ("Tympan" xxiii). My encounter with Derrida's *Margins of Philosophy*, during a difficult year in graduate school, was revelatory. "Tympan," Derrida's preface to this work, held me by the hand and helped me understand what was at stake in the dispute over

centers and margins and the torsion of anxiety that it had generated.

[I]

What did I learn from "Tympan"? I learned that philosophy was a discourse meant to name and circumscribe the limit, and that mastering the limit was part of the condition of possibility of philosophical discourse. Philosophy, Derrida noted, has "recognized, conceived, posited, declined the limit according to all possible modes; and therefore by the same token, in order better to dispose of the limit, has transgressed it. *Its own limit* had not to remain foreign to it. Therefore it has appropriated the concept for itself; it has believed that it controls the margin of its volume and it thinks its other." Derrida's key argument was that philosophy had always insisted on "thinking its other"; but this other was also the source from which it derived "its essence, its definition, and production" (x). The first conceptual lesson I learned from Derrida, which applied to literature as much as it did to philosophy, was that what appeared to be the limit, one whose ascriptions were tied to the other, was inherent in the project that went under the sign of the philosophical. The literary critics who had been seduced by the idea that there was a center constituted by canonical texts, and that these texts represented a "Western" vulgate, had missed the essential lesson that the center derived its essence from what it had created as part of its operative mechanism.

There was a second conceptual lesson that I learned from "Tympan," one that I later found indispensable to what was to become postcolonial criticism: philosophy (one can read "literature") had always maintained a relation with the nonphilosophical, or the anti-philosophical—"the practices and knowledge, empirical or not, that constitute its other"—which it considered anterior to its design. In this sense, the belief that one could establish "a place of exteriority or alterity from which one

might still treat of *philosophy*" was an error (xii). Derrida's conclusion was that "exteriority and alterity" were concepts that had never surprised philosophical discourse because philosophy "*by itself has always been concerned with them*" (xxiii). For a would-be young post-colonialist like me, this claim was the beginning of a true induction into reading with, and in, difference. I learned that to secure the authority of the texts of the margins, one had to reject the idea that they were sources of authenticity and read them as works already implicated in the project of domination. The task of reading "otherwise" depended on rejecting the distinction between exteriority and interiority, margins and centers.³ The task of a post-colonial criticism was not simply to read the inscription of the colonial margins in the European text or to celebrate the texts of difference but also to read the European text against itself, to make the margin not the exteriority that marked it in the discourse of the fashioning of Europe but an operative mechanism of what was assumed to be the center. Derrida's lesson, then, was simple: in reading the great texts in the history of philosophy or literature or historiography, we had to ask "the question of the margin" (xxiii). But could these lessons be transported to the practice of reading texts that were exterior to the project of European self-fashioning in the modern period?⁴

[II]

Consider, for example, the figure of the slave in an archive dominated by the writing of the masters. Whether one is dealing with the ethnography of the West African coast, the inventories of the slaveholding companies, or even the social history of the plantation in the Americas, one is constantly confronted by archiving projects functioning as tools of regulation and control. And wherever one travels in the Atlantic world, from the West African coast to the American plantation, one encounters slave masters, gentlemen

scholars, who seek to assert their authority through record keeping. Archiving seems to be driven by the desire to close down the voices of the dominated. And thus, in the records they keep, or the histories they produce, the plantocracy focuses not on its own deeds and achievements but on the lives of the enslaved, whose personhood they seek to control through writing. From Edward Long's *History of Jamaica* to Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the archiving gesture is a form of violent control; the authority of the archive is pegged on the mastery of enslavement as an event, and the archive derives its legitimacy from natural history. In this archive of domination and subjection, the men of power seek to reduce the enslaved to a lower order of being.

How, then, can one contemplate the possibility of African agency and freedom in these places of symbolic internment? Or, to put it another way, how can the voices of the enslaved be recovered from the deep crypts in which the masters' words have buried them?⁵ Unlike freed slaves (the most prominent names are Equiano, Wheatley, and Douglas) who produce narratives as evidence of their objectification and as a testimony to the violence of the letter of the law, African slaves in what I have called the Atlantic crypt cannot create a counterarchive in writing. Like the colonial subaltern, the slave cannot speak (Spivak, "Subaltern"). How do we read an archive without a subject or witness?

If the researcher's goal is to discover the presence of the subjected in the site of enslavement, the archive has to be read in the space between the masters' demand for unquestioned obedience and the strategies developed by the enslaved to resist their subjection. A useful starting point, perhaps, is to learn to read that which is consigned to the margins of the discourse as a counterpoint to the statements given provenance by the record keepers. For while the middle passage might appear to be an empty space for

the enslaved—a space of death and deep silence—it is, for slave traders and agents alike, an invitation to documentation (Patterson). For those charged with the task of turning African bodies into chattel, the archive is what Derrida described in *Archive Fever* as a site of commencement and commandment (1). But this is also a site of deep anxiety, an anxiety that arises from enslavers' need for a place of beginnings as a source of their own mastery of the contingent and contiguous (Said). The act of mastering by recording the enslavement of others can hence be seen as a means to secure the authority of a beginning and “the power of *consignation*”—the gathering together of signs of difference into a single corpus, “in a system or synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration” (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 3).

But this archive is a disciplinary formation that constantly comes up against the limits of the act that necessitates it—namely, the fact that slavery is not the singular event that record keepers assume it is. A good illustration of the limit here is that while the narratives of the slave master often set out to write the slave as nonhuman, they cannot escape the bodiliness of the enslaved. What are we to make of the slave master who during the day describes the slave woman as an orangutan in his clinical writing and sleeps with her at night?⁶ Writing and archiving gestures are perhaps intended to sort out this contradiction; the event that is inscribed survives in the record while the unwritten and unspoken disappears. But it is in the process of reconciling antinomies that the texts of domination seem to overflow their enforced limit and to crack.

[III]

How do we undo the logic of an event? Since we cannot reverse history or undo the damage done to others through documentation, we can perhaps try to read the limit as the site of a repressed knowledge, of a meaning that

seems regressive or at odds with what the record keeper intended. Consider, then, the account of slave trading meticulously recorded by Peter Blake, captain of the slave ship *James*, owned by the Royal African Company, on a journey from the West African coast to the island of Nevis in the Caribbean. From March 1675 to June 1676, in the early years of the restoration of the English monarchy, Blake will provide his readers (presumably the directors of the company and maritime authorities) with a running record of his activities and encounters, the routes and lanes of his travels, the roads and streets of the West African towns where he exchanges slaves for a variety of goods, and his conversations with local agents. He will provide a detailed account of everyday relationships, forms of exchange, and, of course, an inventory of his purchases. Blake's logbook will become an important source of evidence for historians of the middle passage. Here we have an archive that provides a lexical reality and fulfills a cataloging impulse.

Sunday 16th. . . . came to anchor athwart Anamaboe. I sent my pinace ashore to the Factory to know if they would deliver me any Slaves and Corne, they sd they had no orders, but would have had goods, and I had no Ord'rs to goe into the road, I also sent for 30 paire of shackells I lent them and they told my mate they had slaves in them and could not let them out lest they should run away. . . .

Wednesday 19th. Anchored in Cape Corso road, went ashore and applied myself to Ag't Mellish, also made my Compl't of the Slaves I rece'd at Wyemba by his ord'rs, he replied they were paid in by the King for a debt and it could not be helpt. . . .

Monday 24th. . . . sent ashore the remains of all the goods, except Powd'r and Brandy, I went ashore, gave the Agent an acc't of the sales of what goods I had disposed of, and what slaves I have bought. . . .

Thursday 27th. . . . Capt. Eaton (in the *Merchants Delight*) sett saile from this place bound for Anamaboe and Agga there to take in Slaves

and Corne, and from thence to Accra and Wyemba, to take in their Slaves, this morning W^m Bartlett and . . . by ord^r of Agent Mellish came aboard and counted and marked all our Slaves. . . . went ashore and we adjusted my acc^t w^{ch} was all right onely 1 Chest of Knives wanting. . . .

February, Tuesday 1st. . . . the Generall replied he would not deliver him upon w^{ch} I demanded leave to come into the road wth my ship. He sd I might come into the road but he would not suffer me to touch the Interloper. Grible, the Master of the Interloper, made great Compl^t how he tooke his goods and gave him w^t price he pleased for them, also he made him pay extraordinary prices for slaves, I demanded by w^t Commission he brought the sd Grible downe, he being an English man and English vessel. The fiscall sd . . . [they] thought him to be a hollander . . . he was brought down by mistake. I replied I did think he had affronted the King of England in seizing his subjects and imprisoning them in at Axem in time of peace and that he had affronted the Royall Compa. in harbouring and protecting English Interlopers w^{ch} were the Companies enemies.

Slaves are Blake's most valuable cargo; the success of his mission depends on his capacity to affirm their presence as property and to deliver them from the West African coast to the Caribbean. Crucially, the terms—indeed, the moral economy—of trade demand strict bookkeeping. But Blake's cargo presents problems of perception and representation. Are the slaves to be identified as persons or commodities? We know that Blake cannot represent them as persons because to do so would undermine the moral claims on which Atlantic slavery is built. And yet he cannot simply represent slaves as commodities, reduced to the status of the other goods that he carries on his ship, things such as ivory. In fact, like other captains of slave ships on the West African coast, Blake goes out of his way to segregate goods, gold, and slaves.

In Blake's representation of slaves, the focus is on their physical condition, which affects their exchange value: we learn, for

instance, that there are thin slaves and fat slaves. Describing them in terms of exchange value, he avoids assigning them the quality of the human—thoughts, feelings, language. On board the slave ship, then, the slaves don't have a perceptual or phenomenological presence; and yet they seem to have desires and demands that challenge the fetishism of commodification. Here we can recall Karl Marx's famous claim about the mysterious character of the commodity form, the act of substitution whereby products of labor become commodities and "sensuous things which are at the same time supersensible or social" (165). It is this substitution—or its impossibility—that creates the problem of representation: slaves are commodities. They don't exchange the products of their labor. Indeed, they are the ones exchanged for other commodities, in this case sugar. The exchange assumes equal value between the commodities exchanged, but this equation is challenged by the slaves' insistence on their supersensible or social form. As the following example illustrates, the slaves demand recognition; they make demands that other commodities cannot make:

Monday 7th. . . . Anchored in Suckindee road . . . Mr. Fowler Aylmore came aboard and said I should have my Corne as fast as I would take it . . .

Tuesday 8th. . . . they would have given my men old Corne w^{ch} was not fitt for o^r Slaves to eate—after some dispute I had other Corne. . . .

Wednesday 9th. rec'd 100 Chests of Corne. . . .

March, Wednesday 8th. Sett saile from Dickey's road bound for the Barbadoes.

Thursday 16th. . . . a Turnadoe—wth much thund^r lightening and raine this day I put all my slaves out of Irons. . . .

Wednesday 22th. . . . I called all my thin Slaves aft. w^{ch} came from Wyemba and found 25 of them . . . gave my slaves tobacco and pipes. . . .

Tuesday 28th. Caught fish and agreed to give for every 10 fish pt. of brandy, gave my Slaves 10 fish in their suppis.

Wednesday 29th. Caught albycours and sharks. gave the Slaves albycours.

Thursday 30th. . . . gave the Slaves tobacco and pypes and albyc'r in their Suppis. . . .

Friday 31st. . . . gave the Slaves fish in their suppis. . . .

Monday 17th [April] . . . a stout man slave leaped overboard and drowned himself.

May, Sunday 21st. Made the Island of Barbadoes Att Anchor in Kerley Bay.

Monday, 22nd. Mr. Steed went aboard and looked on o'r Slaves

Tuesday 23rd. orders to prepare the Slaves for sayle on Thursday.

Wednesday 24th. o'r Slaves being shaved I gave them fresh water to wash and Palme Oyle and Tobacco and Pipes.

Thursday 25th. Mr. Steed and [blank] came on board to sell o'r Slaves—wee sould 163 Slaves.

Friday 26th. wee sould 70 Slaves.

How does one represent the body whose needs must be met so that it can be preserved as a commodity?

Blake's deepest anxieties concern the difference between the rate of exchange set by the company (the ratio of slaves to sugar), which is constantly unsettled by market forces. In this context, his archiving project is not intended to recuperate histories and experiences, or simply to record the event for posterity; it is a powerful mechanism for rationalizing the terms of exchange. In the West Indies, Blake finds himself against the wall as

competing trade agents and government authorities accuse him of subterfuge, of working against the code that governs the slave trade:

Wednesday 14th. . . . Went on board of His Majesty's Friggott the *Phoenix*, being sent for by General Stapleton, the Governor of this Island . . . the General asked mee wherefore I brought downe byte Slaves and did not bring down mine owne Gold Coast Slaves Also said he did believe that I had on boord all the refuse of the Shipps that were att Barbadoes. I did assure him that they were the whole cargo of the *John Alexander*. Had they come downe in their owne shipp, it had been much moore for the Company's Interest—was always my opinion.

Thursday 15th. I went ashoare, to discourse about the disposall of o'r Slaves and they (the Agents) shewed mee the Company's instructions which was not to sell good Slaves under 19 *l.* per head and if they could not gett their price that then they should send their shipps downe to Jamaica and that they said that the Man of Warr had given out that they were refuse Bite Slaves soe that they could not sell them but att an Under Rate soe wee continued to Consider of

To justify his voyage in market terms, and to defend himself against the charge of under-selling slaves, Blake has to provide a comprehensive account or catalog of the mortality of slaves on his ship. And it is here, amid the economies of death, that the body of the slave emerges:

[Account—continued:]					
1675	Day	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Ditto	24			1	Received from Wyembah with a dropsy and departed this life of the same disease
Dirkey's Cove —March	26		1		Rec'd from Wyemba thin and soe Continued Untill Death
Ditto	5		1		Miscarryed and the Child dead within her and Rotten and dyed 2 days after delivery.
Att Sea	13	1			Rec'd from Wyembah very thin and soe Continued untill hee departed this life.

		Day	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	
	Ditto	15	1				Rec'd from Wyembah very thin and fell into a flux and soe Continued untill his death.
Att Sea	1676	18	1				Rec'd from Wyembah very thin and soe fell into a Consumption and dep'ted this life.
	Ditto	30	1				Rec'd from Wyembah very thin and soe Continued Wasting untill death.
	Ditto	31			1		Very sick and fell overboard in the night and was lost
	Ditto	Aprill	6	1			Rec'd from Wyembah thin and Consumed very low and after dyed of a Great Swelling of his face and head.
	Ditto	14	1				Rec'd from Wyembah thin and dyed of a flux
	Ditto	15		1			Rec'd from Wyembah Sickened and would not eat or take anything.
	Ditto	16	1				bought by mee and died of a flux
	Ditto	17	2				The one rec'd from Wyembah and dyed of a flux.
							The other rec'd ditto who Leaped Over boord and drowned himself.
	Ditto	20		1			rec'd thin at Wyembah and dyed of a Consumption.
	Ditto	21			1		rec'd from Weyembah with a dropsy and soe dyed.
	Ditto	26		1			bought by myselfe and being very fond of her Child Carrying her up and downe wore her to nothing by which means fell into a feavour and dyed.
Att Sea	May	1	1				Rec'd from Anamabooe departed this of a flux.
	Ditto	2		1			Rec'd from Agga and departed this life of a flux.

Alive the slaves are anonymous; in death they are embodied. In the records of their death, we have details about their bodies, their ways of living and dying.

I find myself fixated by that unnamed woman who died on 5 March. Blake had acquired her at Wyemba when she was already thin and wasting. She miscarried and then died two days later. Who was she? What was her name? Where did she come from? Who were her people? Blake does not answer these questions, but he does not foreclose them either; in providing us with an aggregation of death to justify his losses, his ledger enables us to imagine bodies. With the bodies before

us, we imagine the ontological status of what was supposed to be chattel. But this imagining, the reanimation of the dead, as it were, still confronts us with the double bind of the archive and its conceptual limit: we try to imagine the bodies in Blake's logbook as subjects but come up with an inventory; at the same time, this record of death seems to open up the past and to release some unintended possibilities. There are no names, just numbers or, better still, figures. Can these figures be imagined as bodies or even selves? Can the voices of the subjected rise out of, or beyond, the inventory that was intended to encase them in the Atlantic crypt?

One could, of course, animate the invisible archive of the slaves from the experience of the present, as Michael Harper does in "American History":

Those four black girls blown up
in that Alabama church
remind me of five hundred
middle passage blacks,
in a net, under water
in Charleston harbor
so *redcoats* wouldn't find them.
Can't find what you can't see
can you?

Or put the archive under the pressures of what Diana Taylor would call the repertoire of "embodied expression" (16). One could follow the example of NourbeSe Philip and try to undo the archive through performative gestures that return us to the archive without acceding to its mandate. Here, through graphological displacements, the event comes to be inseparable from its limit:

Zong! #17

there was
the this
the that
the frenzy
leaky seas and
casks
negroes of no belonging
on board
no rest
came the rains
came the negroes
came the perils
came the owners
master and mariners

Zong! #18

the this
the that
the frenzy
came the insurance of water
water of good only

came water sufficient
that was truth
and seas of mortality
question the now
the this
the that
the frenzy

not unwisely

If Blake wants a ledger in which everything is intelligible, Philip undoes this project by insisting on what Édouard Glissant would call "the right to opacity" (189).

[IV]

An insistence on opacity leads me back to where I began. Does literature answer a need? How is it to be understood? Literature? The need? I started my editorship of *PMLA* five years ago with a column that raised the questions posed to me by my grandmother on my departure for the university: "What is this thing called literature? What work does it do?" For the last five years, I have been engaged with the best that is thought and written about literature in the profession as it is practiced in North America and beyond. I don't think these years have given me a definitive answer about what literature is, or what work it does, but they have provided me with the best possible education on both the singularity and the multiplicity of the literary experience. Editing *PMLA* has taught me that literature is many things, takes different forms, and speaks different languages but also that it is unified by reading. It is in the literary text that writers, readers, and critics meet. And although I'm not sure what need literature fulfills, I'm convinced that we keep on reading and writing about literature, often in what seems to be defiance of its presumed death, because it meets a need that evades simple naming. This being my last column as editor of *PMLA*, I leave you in the good

hands of my successor, Wai Chee Dimock, and I thank you for having given me the opportunity to be at the center of a remarkable community of readers.

Simon Gikandi

NOTES

1. Gayatri Spivak explores the cultural implications of the demand that one name the margin and be its voice ("Marginality" 55).

2. This is an adaptation of the opening of Jacques Derrida's "Tympan": "Does philosophy answer a need? How is it to be understood? Philosophy? The need?" (x).

3. Kyoo Lee provides an exemplary model of reading otherwise.

4. I address these questions in greater detail in "Rethinking the Archive of Enslavement" and in *The Atlantic Crypt: The African in the Archive of Slavery*, a book I am completing. Versions of the argument that follows have been presented to audiences at New York University (5 Mar. 2014), George Washington University (28 Oct. 2014), Brown University (4 Mar. 2015), and Connecticut College (13 Apr. 2016).

5. My use of the crypt metaphor follows Abraham and Torok.

6. To assert the radical and moral differences between blacks and other races, Jefferson claims that in matters of beauty and desire even the black's own judgment is "in favor of whites declared uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own species" (265). Where would Jefferson locate Sally Hemmings in the order of nature? I owe this question to a conversation with Faith Smith, who elaborates how sexuality functioned in economies of slavery in "Caribbean Literature and Sexuality."

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Presidential Address 2016

Literature and Its Publics: Past, Present, and Future

ROLAND GREENE

SOME THINGS DON'T CHANGE MUCH. ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN years ago, at an MLA conference in Champaign, Illinois, the president of the Central Division, the Germanist James Taft Hatfield of Northwestern University, delivered an address on "the relation of scholarship to the commonwealth," which I recognize as a version of this year's theme, *Literature and Its Publics*.¹ When the address was published later in *PMLA*, the account of it went as follows: "the remarks of the President were clear, incisive, sparkling, and proved an excellent introduction to one of the most interesting meetings" of the association. (The minutes go on to share the secretary's concern that the conference has too many papers, which run too long, and to record the balance in the Central Division's funds: \$1.33 ["Proceedings" lxxv].)

The early records of MLA business, especially presidential addresses, remind us that many of the conditions of our profession have long histories. In his address of 1914, titled "The American Professor," Felix Schelling complains of onerous teaching loads, low pay, and precarious social status (lvii, lxiv). In 1915 Jefferson B. Fletcher lamented that, in contrast to previous generations of professors whose stern pedagogy ran the risk of turning into pedantry, "in this day and land of equality, when youth will be served, we pedagogues placate. We become entertainers" (xxxix). And in 1919, Edward C. Armstrong made this self-criticism:

We deplore our having so little say [in institutional matters], and yet how uncommon it is that we unite to voice a common will. Have you ever participated in the efforts of a faculty, on its own initiative, to formulate and maintain an opinion on a measure of any complexity? Have you ever wrestled with the problem of persuading a faculty group who agree on a

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general proposition to accommodate their differences of view on its details? (xxviii)

Some things change utterly, however. Historians of our profession, notably the former MLA president Gerald Graff, have rightly observed the currents of elitism and nostalgic humanism that run through the presidential addresses of a hundred or so years ago, in which “elegiac recollections of the lost serenities of the old college alternated with bitter denunciations of the spiritual degradation of democratic times” (114–15). While we encounter in these addresses the bare facts of today’s professional life, most of us now would recoil from the deeper implications of the attitudes the presidents held toward the general public. Many of these scholars felt an identity with the writers whom their philological activities served and a remoteness from their own public world, seen as populated by those whom Hatfield called “the hosts of Philistia” (408). The objects of scorn could include not only young people, the working class, immigrants, and anyone else whose linguistic and rhetorical sophistication fell below the academic standard but the avant-gardes that now define the era in literary and cultural history. In his address of 1912, Charles Hall Grandgent, bitterly denouncing his contemporaries the futurists and the cubists (“and Neo’s of every description”), argues that scholars like himself are caught between avant-garde and mass culture (lvii). He concludes with an attack on the present as a “Dark Age” “induced by the gradual triumph of democracy, [which] will last until the masses, now become arbiters of taste and science, shall have been raised to the level formerly occupied by the privileged classes” (lvii–lviii).

No doubt these intellectual and professional reflections tell us a great deal about the history of our profession in relation to the public. For the moment I am interested in one aspect of that historical relation, namely the enduring question of to whom our work

speaks and the long-standing contrivance of universalism in answering that question. I want to recite in brief a story of how our field emerged out of a universalist past into the present and provoke reflection on the future.

As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak observed about ten years ago in her book *Death of a Discipline*, literary studies (including comparative literature, the discipline with which Spivak was concerned) depends on a working doctrine of collectivity, or the answer to the question, “who are ‘we’?” (26). In teaching, collectivity may seem to be a given—the population of students in a certain classroom in conversation with the historically constituted “we” of a certain work—but in fact many of us strive to broaden that group over time by improving access to college and graduate study and to assemble new collectivities in the received population, such as research groups for undergraduates and PhD students. In scholarship, thinking about collectivity is really a way of invoking the interlocutors to whom our work speaks transhistorically and in the present. If I write about Shakespeare and Cervantes, or Allen Ginsberg and Haroldo de Campos, how does my project assemble a public? Who are my, or our, imagined readers? How does the project create the readership it wants? Perhaps the most fundamental question is, If the assumed collectivity were stated directly (“this primary work spoke to that public in the past and speaks to this one in the present”), would it align with the practices of the critic? In some sense, I will suggest, the recent history of literary studies recapitulates the changes in how these publics have been conceived.

For many years, the study of literature was haunted by the problem of universalism. Universalism in our discipline shares a name with doctrines in philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence but is a distinct problem that entails its own challenges. Unlike these other disciplines, where universalism is typically an article of active belief—for instance, the

jurist Francisco de Vitoria's position in his *relectio De Indis* of 1537 that the colonized peoples of the Americas belonged to a world population subject to natural law and the rights that attend it, or the promulgation in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—literary studies in the past enabled and even encouraged a universalism that operated as an unexamined premise rather than an object of debate. This tacit doctrine understood collectivity as a given: “literature is by and for everyone,” where “everyone” is left undefined and unelaborated. Of course this gesture was not as inclusive as it claimed to be. Often the public in question was really a small population of professional and initiated readers whose interests were aggrandized to speak generally and universally; the doctrine granted an indeterminate power to the pronouns *we* and *us*. In the national literatures this universalism often gave cover to nationalism and parochialism, while in comparative literature it tended to produce a kind of criticism that acknowledged no location and therefore spoke to everyone and no one.

From the nineteenth century to World War II, literary studies relied on a set of universalist assumptions to carry out much of its business: its ventures in philology, biography, generic classification and definition, and thematic analysis were typically undertaken in the name of a common reader who was better understood by implication than in substance, whose name was often “we.” For example, in 1914 the former MLA president George Lyman Kittredge, one of the most distinguished philologists of his time, delivered a lecture on Geoffrey Chaucer in which he leaped from one universalist premise, that Chaucer's poetry speaks to all ages in the voice of a contemporary, to another, that we in the present all experience the same Chaucer, and for that matter the same present:

Chaucer is the most modern of English poets, and one of the most popular. . . . For he

knew life and loved it, and his specialty was mankind as it was, and is. Besides, his age was vastly like our own, in everything but costume and “the outward habit of encounter.” . . . It was an age of intense activity,—a singularly “modern” time. (Chaucer 1–2)

When two years later he addresses Shakespeare, of whose plays he was the most admired early-twentieth-century editor, Kittredge allows more scope for difference:

There will be as many Hamlets or Macbeths or Othellos as there are readers or spectators. For the impressions are not made, or meant to be made, on one uniformly registering and mechanically accurate instrument, but on an infinite variety of capriciously sensitive and unaccountable individualities—on “us,” in short, who see as we can, and understand as we are. Your Hamlet is not my Hamlet, for your ego is not my ego.

But when we are done trying to explain our discrete and personal Shakespeares to one another, Kittredge observes, “[T]here must still remain, in the last analysis, a difference that is beyond reconciliation, except in the universal solvent of our common humanity” (Shakespeare 12–13). And then there comes this “corrective and restraining proviso”:

[S]omewhere there exists, and must be discoverable, the solid fact—and that fact is Shakespeare's Hamlet or Macbeth or Othello. And this actual being is not to be confused, in your apprehension or in mine, with any of the figures that we have constructed, each for himself, by the instinctive reaction of our several personalities under the stimulus of the poet's art. (13)

In holding up Kittredge as an example, I do not mean to suggest that his views went uncontested in his time. On the contrary, he was vividly challenged on his philological methods by contemporaries, notably the New Humanists such as Irving Babbitt.² But with

a few exceptions, universalism was not at issue. The patchwork of universals postulated by Kittredge—according to which literature, the humanities, and the scholarship about them advance mutually reinforcing claims to timelessness, presentness, and importance—had become an indispensable convenience in what is always on the agenda in our fields, making the case for what we do.

World War II is commonly held as the threshold between a founding model of comparative literature and what the discipline is today, for several reasons but mostly because the war drove a number of European scholars into American universities, where they articulated a fresh sense of disciplinary possibilities and a new cosmopolitanism. I think this account is true as far as it goes, but what should be remembered—and what several recent historians of the field have reminded us—is that the war dealt a more decisive blow to universalist assumptions about literature than did any theory. The scholars who relocated to America during and after the war found themselves working in a redrawn disciplinary horizon. The world as they had regarded it, namely, the Europe that had formed the ground of comparative literary studies, had been slashed into opposed, sometimes unintelligible cultural zones; the existence of a common cultural heritage had been thrown into question; and little could be assumed in the theory or practice of a comparative literature across these problems and divisions.

It has become a cliché to treat Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*, published in 1946, as the exemplar of this historical moment, but where twenty or more years ago the book was seen as the expression of a comparative literature closed to non-European perspectives (which to a limited view, it is), it ought to be understood instead as an attempt to rethink the nature of collectivity for comparative literature—and for literary studies generally—in a broken world. Auerbach's study does not assume a universalist stance for the discipline

but returns to first principles in an attempt to figure out what constitutes the realist tradition in the West. And the historical importance of *Mimesis*, I think, is not its coherent method but its struggle to uphold a discipline that, since it can no longer rely on an unspoken universalism, must speak to literary studies' version of collectivity at every turn. The first words of the book posit no "we" but run thus: "Readers of the *Odyssey* will remember . . .," as though the project here will be to assemble those readers, propose interpretations to them, and then gather communities from work to work, chapter to chapter, into a new collectivity (3). For literary studies, some variety of universalism is always near and available; none of us is immune from the blandishments of a position that can arise out of convenience or self-absorption as much as conviction. But from Auerbach on, if we take *Mimesis* as marking a threshold in our common fields, the most intriguing and moving examples of literary studies have often been those in which the absence of a universalist credo is noted and addressed. What I mean to suggest is that the history of the larger discipline of literary studies in the twentieth century can be divided into the universalist and postuniversalist periods, roughly before and after World War II, symbolically before and after *Mimesis*, and that much of what is interesting about the latter era comes from the struggle against an unspoken universalism—a resistance that must be enacted afresh with every turn of method and articulated again in nearly every piece of scholarship. Universalism haunts the study of literature, as the founding article whose repudiation, once unthinkable, came to be necessary for the field to maintain its connection to history and lived experience.

Consider the work of a European scholar who came to the United States not during World War II but a generation earlier, in 1926: the Czech comparatist René Wellek, whose book *Theory of Literature* (1949), written with

Austin Warren, is, like Auerbach's *Mimesis*, one of the primers of postwar literary studies. From the first pages of the first edition of *Theory of Literature*, it is clear that the difficulty of imagining a collectivity troubles Wellek's project in ways that we should recognize even if the problem was still indistinct to him and his contemporaries. Wellek's purpose in this book is to advance a theoretical framework for identifying "the concrete object of the work of art." In that connection, the first chapter proposes that formalist description and interpretation obviate the need for a reliable alternative to the unspoken universal:

Literary criticism and literary history both attempt to characterize the individuality of a work, of an author, of a period, or of a national literature. But this characterization can be accomplished only in universal terms, on the basis of a literary theory. Literary theory, an organon of methods, is the great need of literary scholarship today. (19)

Not only does Wellek subsume the question of literary studies' collectivity—the "who are we?" of literature and criticism—into a continuing debate about the ontology of works of art, but he dismisses the prospect, which shows itself fleetingly, of incommensurability between populations of writers and readers—and more threatening, between particular writers and readers:

[L]ike every human being, each work of literature has its individual characteristics; but it also shares common properties with other works of art, just as every man shares traits with humanity, with all members of his sex, nation, class, profession, etc. We can thus generalize concerning works of art, Elizabethan drama, all drama, all literature, all art. (19)

What Wellek will not ponder unswervingly, here or elsewhere in *Theory of Literature*, is that even as history has fractured literatures and intellectual traditions and rendered certain concepts (the universal, the great, the

natural) suspect or even useless, it has likewise rendered the undifferentiated readership of literature into a multiplicity of readerships divided by language, historical experience, sex, and other factors.

This lack of commonality among readers is the specter that Wellek, Auerbach, and their generation confront, as the first literary scholars to do business without a universalist credo in the background. In *Mimesis*, *Theory of Literature*, and elsewhere in the work of this cohort, these figures witness the arrival of a postuniversalist order, consider its fuller implications, and develop provisional strategies to contain these possibilities. In Wellek's case, the containment takes the form of reducing a looming incommensurability to differences among individuals rather than the ruptures brought about by conquest, slavery, colonialism, diaspora, subjugation, and so forth—conditions that could scarcely be far from the mind of the Czech Wellek, who began *Theory of Literature* only one year after the Munich agreement began the process of turning his native country over to Nazi Germany partly under the pressure of internal ethnic tensions. The potential zones of difference among readers and critics make an almost unbearable subtext in these scholarly books, glanced at but not explored, while Wellek, Auerbach, and the rest struggle with the problem of reframing the discipline after universalism's demise. The theory of literature becomes the basis of a new universalism, not metaphysical or ethical, as in so much scholarship of the early twentieth century, but formal, structural, and thematic.

At the same time, Wellek and his contemporaries realize that such an attenuated universalism still demands some concession to history, to the incommensurabilities that remain in the collective dimension of literary study. This fact conditions the appearance of what I take to be the main theoretical venture of *Theory of Literature*, the definition of perspectivism. As Wellek explains,

The answer to historical relativism is not a doctrinaire absolutism which appeals to “unchanging human nature” or the “universality of art.” We must rather adopt a view for which the term “Perspectivism” seems suitable. We must be able to refer a work of art to the values of its own time and of all the periods subsequent to its own. A work of art is both “eternal” (i.e. preserves a certain identity) and “historical” (i.e. passes through a process of traceable development). . . . “Perspectivism” means that we recognize that there is one poetry, one literature, comparable in all ages, developing, changing, full of possibilities. (43)

What is Wellek doing here? One is tempted to see his gesture toward perspectivism as the rehabilitation of a universalist notion of literature under the protective coloration of a high-modernist concession to multiple perspectives. And yet in his attempt to offer a safety valve to let off the pressures of a gathering sense of incommensurability and, at the same time, to qualify the limited reinvestment in universalism made earlier in *Theory of Literature*, Wellek, with whatever degree of awareness, fashions an opening that will in turn lead to a version of literary studies more thoroughly disengaged from universalism—a largely decentered discipline of multiple locales and few absolutes, many perspectives but few doctrines. Wellek’s perspectivism is one of the earliest conceptual renderings of what would replace an unquestioned universalism: a cultivation of difference among readers, writers, and critics over what literature is, how and what works mean, and to whom criticism speaks. An intellectual back formation that names a practice for a world stripped of universals, perspectivism is perhaps the first critical implement to be adapted to postwar reality, ratified in effect though not in name for several succeeding generations into the present.

This striking change in the field’s intellectual landscape reflects the historical conditions of the late 1930s and early 1940s

and dispatches promises to be redeemed in the following generations. Many examples would show the implications of a postuniversalist literary scholarship, but since I began by citing some presidents of the association as representative of their time, let me acknowledge the appearance of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978, a book by a more recent president that opened an episode in the life of the humanities in which we are still living and also—its earliest readers were surprised to learn—owed a great deal to Auerbach’s *Mimesis*. Both books reset the dials of the discipline as they found it to account for a world, and a world of literature, starkly different from the one that had formed their disciplinary assumptions (Lindenberger). My view is that Said’s project takes something from Wellek as well, notably the accommodation of perspectivism in *Theory of Literature*, where the epistemological and ethical conditions of the field go quietly under revision. Regarding collectivities, Auerbach, Wellek, and Said pose questions about the past that encroach powerfully on the present. This is who they were, say these critics; who are we? Are we connected to one another? And might literature be understood not as the sign of a connection determined elsewhere—say, in nationality, language, or education—but as the fabric of that connection itself? How can literary works (and, we would add, film, video, rhetoric, and so on) not merely assume but establish collectivity? How can teachers, scholars, editors, and all the rest of us be agents for the making of a public?

Since Auerbach’s and Said’s eras, we have discovered new answers to these kinds of questions. Said’s project portended the counteruniversalist conversation of the past three and a half decades. A theme such as *Literature and Its Publics* evokes the reality that the most dynamic teaching and scholarship now involve assembling new collectivities around shared topics, questions, and occasions. There is no longer a “we” that can bear the weight

of argument regardless of context; in its place are ad hoc communities around common projects. There is no philistine public against whom we set our scholarly efforts; instead there are potential audiences and allies everywhere whom we reach through criticism, editing, the digital humanities, blogging, and more. Intellectual work in our field, we have learned from *Mimesis*, *Orientalism*, and many later landmarks, is most compelling when it strikes out dramatically to enlarge its received community and renew its lingua franca.

I retell this history not to celebrate or embarrass the memories of certain scholars and presidents but to reflect on our shared past, evoking what the Indologist Sheldon Pollock calls “the humbling force of genealogy” through which we confront our own “historicity, constructedness, and changeability” as a discipline (948). I have dwelt on early alternatives to universalism because I believe that doctrine, though no one endorses it openly like a Kittredge now, retains a latent charisma in our fields: the power of the unexamined “we.” There are ethical and pedagogical reasons to continue resisting universalism. Ethically, we owe it to our discipline to acknowledge that literature often speaks in a remote, cryptic register to an ambiguous collectivity. The work of philology, editing, and interpretation is to maintain that strangeness in an expanded collectivity, assembling rather than assuming a public. I admire scholarship and teaching that offer the communitarian gesture of bringing a public together—like the first six words of *Mimesis*—even while acknowledging their own limited vantage in history and culture. To mention a recent book, Sianne Ngai’s *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* (2012), which was awarded the James Russell Lowell Prize at the 2014 convention, in Chicago, demonstrates the conceptual power that can be unleashed from modest claims about marginal cultural phenomena and from a likewise unassuming, even motley collectiv-

ity that grows over the run of the argument. Three unpromising categories in which few readers can be invested become the basis of a kind of parable that implicates no less than “the hypercommodified, information-saturated, performance-driven conditions” of present-day capitalist society (1). Over the course of the book the terms deepen, the audience grows, and before long we are looking at ourselves as contemporary North American consumers, but from an angle.

Pedagogically, we owe it to our students to cultivate conscious alternatives to universalism that confront the spectral power in that doctrine: after all, they must live in a world where unexamined collectivities find diminishing license across the range of cultures. Most of us at this convention live the counteruniversalist struggle in the classroom every day. Teaching tends to unsettle overly general assumptions; many of us at some time have probably anticipated that we, our students and ourselves, will share some perception or feeling only to discover that I, myself, am unconsciously deducing from private experience. I believe that the classroom should be not only the locus of this encounter with difference but its laboratory. Each group of students that comes to us is composed of multiple collectivities, sometimes to remain many and occasionally to become one: in that sense the classroom is one of the elemental sites in which publics are fashioned, and all of us who teach are public intellectuals. We should accept this role consciously and creatively. We intervene between writers, and among writers and their publics; we deliver works to their audiences, and above all we interpret, saying about a work of culture—a poem, a film, or a student’s paper—what it cannot say about itself. Interpretation is always indispensable to culture making, but interpretation that builds collectivities while casting universalism in a critical light is urgent now. Our numbers matter too: my friend George Andreou, an editor at Alfred A. Knopf, likes to say that in

his business the readership for serious literature in this country is believed to be 50,000 people. While our work as agents of culture unfolds over time in unquantifiable ways, I feel obliged to note that over the next week the 27,000 members of the MLA will speak to ten or even a hundred times that readership in our classrooms. When we profess interpretation to our students, and especially when we enact the office of reading observantly and reflectively, we make a public for our field.

The MLA confronts its own existential question of collectivity: who is the “we” of a scholarly association distinguished by its journals, its convention, and its bibliography when as many as three of four college teachers work off the tenure track? Does the association, in its evolution away from the cloistered collectivity of the early twentieth century, answer the multifarious needs of the populations it serves? Over the past ten years or so, the MLA has reconceived itself not only to serve its distinctive cohorts of members but to make the assembling of new collectivities central to its mission—and the project continues. Under the leadership of recent presidents and Executive Councils and the guidance of Executive Director Rosemary Feal, and through the efforts of the one-hundred-member staff at 85 Broad Street, we conceive and build the resources that make it possible for members to carry out their roles collectively, whether that means identifying a community of interest around an author or a topic through the book series *Approaches to Teaching* or brokering information for isolated, disenfranchised contingent faculty members about salaries or teaching loads in the Advocacy section of the Web site or providing a venue on *MLA Commons* for discussion of issues as they emerge. The new forum structure devised by the former MLA presidents Marianne Hirsch and Margaret W. Ferguson, which takes effect for the first time here in Austin, demonstrates collectivities in action: for example, a forum or an allied

organization can obtain an extra session at the convention in collaboration with another group or, in other words, by assembling a new community. The launch of Action for Allies and Connected Academics, the appointment of senior staff members with new portfolios for outreach and information systems, the provision of the MLA’s first overseas conference in Düsseldorf next summer, and the survey of members that informed a new strategic plan for the next five years mean that 2015 was a productive year of collective action; I know the presidencies of K. Anthony Appiah, Diana Taylor, and Anne Ruggles Gere will improve on our beginnings. I thank my fellow officers past and present, my colleagues on the Executive Council, Rosemary Feal, the staff, and of course the members for their collaboration. And I acknowledge the ghosts of Presidents Hatfield, Kittredge, and Said and the other scholars with whom I have conversed tonight—a transgenerational company that should encourage us to keep asking the most basic of questions, Who are we, and to whom are we speaking and writing?

NOTES

1. According to Carol Zuses, coordinator of governance, the Central Division was a splinter group that separated from the MLA to hold meetings away from the East Coast. It existed from 1895 to 1923. Hatfield served as president of the MLA in 1934.

2. Babbitt’s *Literature and the American College* includes several criticisms of Kittredge and his fellow philologists, always unnamed; see especially “Literature and the Doctor’s Degree” 118–49.

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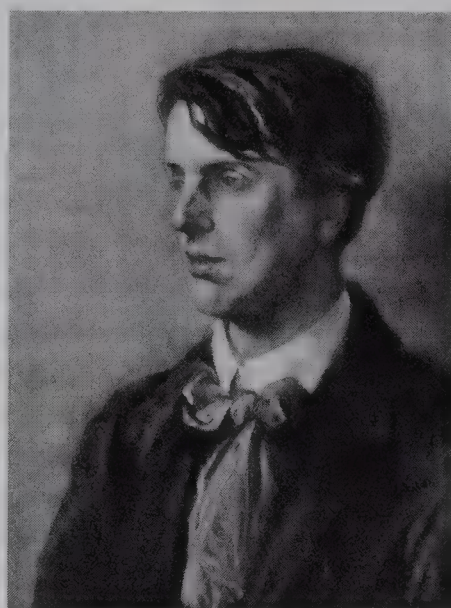
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Yeats's Latent Keats / Keats's Latent Yeats

SUSAN J. WOLFSON

Left: Portrait of Yeats, detail, by Charles Shannon (1908). A grayscale photogravure, by Emery Walker, is a frontispiece in Yeats's 1908 *Works* and the frontispiece of *The Trembling of the Veil* (1922). The painting hangs in the reading room of the Houghton Library, Harvard. The photograph is by courtesy of Princeton University Library.

Right: Charcoal sketch on paper of Keats, by Joseph Severn (1818). It was intended for but not used as the frontispiece for *Endymion: A Poetic Romance* (1818). © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Drawing Yeats / Drawing on Keats

“SHANNON . . . HAS JUST DONE A DRAWING OF ME WHICH IS VERY charming, but by an unlucky accident most damnably like Keats,” wrote Yeats to a friend 7 January 1908, adding, “If I publish it by itself everybody will think it an affectation of mine” (*Letters* 502). By April, he had come to think the portrait “exceedingly fine,” telling this same friend that he was “having it reproduced in the collected edition” of his works (509)—one of several frontispieces by different artists in a serial portrait gallery of Yeats-the-poet. But such initial reluctance about Shannon’s Keatsy-Yeats!—a spasm about affectation rather than any fellow-poet affection, a charm so unlucky as to feel damnable. In his second decade of poetic fame, Yeats, at forty-two, squirms at looking like Keats, dead long ago at age twenty-five. It

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was about more than the luck of the drawing, of course. It was about being taken for Keats, with sensitivity to what he has taken from Keats. "Mr. Yeats . . . occasionally succeeds in 'out-glittering' Keats," wrote Oscar Wilde in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1889. Yeats took this to heart.¹ He was too keen, too self-conscious, not to have winced at eye-rhymed Keats/Yeats as a symbolic portent (closer in sound to an Irish ear than the Anglo long-*e* Keats / long-*a* Yeats). The rhyme-image, irritated by an image "like Keats," precipitated an unhappy Keatsian glitter on Yeats's modernity.

It is "not . . . preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past," wrote one critic and poet (not yet thirty) in 1917, who admired both Keats and Yeats. Poets who are "aware of this," T. S. Eliot went on to say, "will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities" (45). Such awareness may shape conscious craft; it may also weave uncanny threads of poetic texture, in workings of, workings out of, intimate particulars in words and forms. This essay is about the complexity of Keatsian tracks into the nineteenth century, ones that bear down with difficult responsibilities as they angle toward a "modernism" drawn and defined at Keats's expense, yet with latent identifications. In the altering relations of past and present, latent figures may tell more than explicit allusion, more even than exposures of a psychodrama of influence, ravages and resistances, including those unappeasable hauntings and sensations of belatedness that issue in dialectics of self-interested misreading.²

Yeats's vacillation between charm and unease communicates a larger, underreported current in both Keats studies and Yeats studies: a "Long Romanticism" that troubles any "Modernism" (poets' or critics') inclined to pivot on definitional and historical difference.³ Keats's writing holds figures to which Yeats could respond, even correspond. In 1888, he confessed to fellow poet Katharine

Tynan that the arc of his poems seemed, as he thought about it, almost always "a flight into fairyland from the real world, and a summons to that flight . . . not the poetry of insight and knowledge, but of longing and complaint—the cry of the heart against necessity," and he disciplined himself to a long goal: "to alter that and write poetry of insight and knowledge" (*Letters* 63). It is the very arc, with the same key words and tropes, that Keats drew across "Ode to a Nightingale." Keats registers as the alter ego that is both alter and ego. Such refinements of difference, stressed by oblique affiliations, mark out a quarrel for sure—not just with Keats but with Yeatsian Keats.

"Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine," wrote Keats in 1819, and this is "the very thing in which consists poetry."⁴ Yeatsians know an aphorism in this key, almost a century on, from *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1918): "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." Whether or not Yeats had checked Keats's scorecard, a common chord is audible: "Unlike the rhetoricians, who get a confident voice from remembering the crowd they have won or may win, we sing amid our uncertainty," Yeats elaborates (29). There is yet a further Keatsian ring in "amid . . . uncertainty": that receptivity to "uncertainties" Keats strengthened into an aesthetic principle of "negative capability."⁵ But if Yeats can sound to us "like Keats" in these wordings, Yeats himself missed the audit in the auditorium of a "Keats" that he needed to disdain for the sake of a modernity reflexively, polemically, signing itself post-Romantic. The operation verges on the "uncanny"—a term that Freud sees slipping its prefix to coincide with canny: "something . . . familiar . . . in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (148). Yeats's overdetermined alienation of Keats operates differently from the aggressive flexing of Keats's "young poets" generation against eighteenth-century protocols.⁶ For "Modern" Yeats, the binary was

a still haunting “Romantic” nexus of beauty, ideals, dreams, aspirations.

Yeats’s “Modernity” is the incomplete process, cannily conscious of what is relative, relational. “Keats” is the apparition of a puerile dreamy sensuousness that a proper “modernist” estranges, and even distorts. It is now a standard narrative, with Yeats’s own authority, to chart his career as Early/Middle/Late, with “Romantic” on the wane.⁷ Yet in a more self-congratulatory mood, Yeats could rank himself among the “last romantics.” Although he meant generic cultural forms and ideals, not a genealogy from the English poets of the early nineteenth century, by the time “Late” Yeats wrote this phrase in “Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931” (41) the term “romantic” had this historical register, too, and Yeats not only cannot deflect the information but may have allowed it, under surveillance.⁸ It is not the Romantic generation categorically that Yeats fends off with his self-definings and gate-keeping periodizing. He could cheer Blake for the invention of a “symbolist” mythology, could cheer Shelley for visionary dreamers and a “beauty” of Platonic metaphysical import—both modes generating a unifying cosmology in vigorous opposition to utilitarian mandates and middle-class moralism.⁹

Keats’s poetry, instinctively averse to such macropolemics, courses for Yeats along the Victorian parlor lines polished from Matthew Arnold on: small-bore pictorial vividness, vibrant word-painting, a “love of embodied things, of precision of form and colouring” (“Philosophy” 133). Yeats admired Keats’s skill in this, and could even appreciate how islands of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and colonies of Keats’s *Endymion* “described . . . certain qualities of beauty, certain forms of sensuous loveliness [that] were separated from all the general purposes of life.”¹⁰ But even if Yeats rejected moralizing “indignation” about this sequestration (*Trembling* 189), his praise is faint praise, proximate to a weakness (Shelley’s too) for luxuries drawn

from “the impression made by the world upon . . . delicate senses.”¹¹ And it tips into damnable in the part cast for “Keats” in the poem Yeats reproduced for his preface to *Per Amica*.

This is “Ego Dominus Tuus,” a discussion, sometimes a quarrel, between HIC (Latin: this one) and ILLE (that one).¹² In “ILLE,” Ezra Pound decoded the Yeats-nickname “Willie.”¹³ Yeats gives this anti-Romantic the last word, and more: a call to another, severer antagonist—severer, because he is at once ILLE and a new “other,” a paradox that ILLE describes this way:

. . . the mysterious one who yet
Shall walk the wet sand by the water’s edge,
And look most like me, being indeed my
double,
And prove of all imaginable things
The most unlike, being my anti-self,
And . . . disclose
All that I seek. (*Per Amica* 14–15)

Some pages on in *Per Amica*, Yeats triplicates this “other self, the anti-self or the antithetical self,” to say that it “comes but to those who are no longer deceived, whose passion is reality” (30)—and so even more “realist” than ILLE yet is but aspires to be. “We meet always in the deep of the mind, whatever our work, wherever our reverie carries us, that other Will,” Yeats writes, punning himself.¹⁴ HIC has his say, but it is plotted for ILLE’s modernist correction, a willed “other” of self-improvement.

Yeats’s deep worry, however, is that Keats, too, looks like “my double,” and Keats is the very last candidate for Yeats’s “unlike,” revelatory “anti-self.” “I think he fashioned from his opposite,” says ILLE of Dante’s severe, tragic art (11). This is Dante’s heroism; but a Dante described just three lines above, in “hunger for the apple on the bough / Most out of reach,” will, two pages on, uncannily supply the imprint for Yeats’s “Keats”:

HIC
Yet surely there are men who have made their
art

Out of no tragic war; lovers of life,
Impulsive men, that look for happiness,
And sing when they have found it.

ILLE

No, not sing,
For those that love the world serve it in action,
Grow rich, popular, and full of influence;
And should they paint or write still it is action,
The struggle of the fly in marmalade.
The rhetorician would deceive his neighbours,
The sentimentalist himself; while art
Is but a vision of reality. (12–13)

No art in the fly's struggle in marmalade: Yeats remembered Verlaine's telling him, in 1894, of living, not even struggling, in Paris "like a fly in a pot of marmalade"¹⁵—hardly heroic, its only peril its surfeit. ILLE resets the metric for non-"art": artful rhetoric or self-deception rather than self-quarreling. The correction that "art / Is but a vision of reality" could not be more offhand, more assured—merely this, and always this for a modernist. Otherwise art is decadent, so ILLE continues this sentence:

What portion in the world can the artist have,
Who has awakened from the common dream,
But dissipation and despair? (13)

Yet the poetic structure of this seeming rhetorical question vacillates. The first line, paused on a comma, seems the question *tout court*. But the "Who" sequel is ambiguous: is this "the artist" per se, or the artist of dissipation and despair? And what is the prepositional sense of *from*? One "Who has awakened [up] from the common dream" might well put a claim on "a vision of reality," might even have awakened this consciousness (out) from the dream itself.¹⁶ Yeats was not sure: in the 1917 *Wild Swans*, the two commas were absent, giving "Who" the sense of categorical artist (24). The shifty grammar is ghosted by the Keatsian poet who asks of his dissipated music, "Was it a vision or a waking dream? / . . . Do I wake or sleep?" ("Ode to a Nightin-

gale" 79–80) or the letter writer who mapped maturity as an "awakening" from sweetness to "sharpening one's vision into" the "dark Passages" of life and its answerable poetry.¹⁷

Yeats's disciplinary modernism, operating against Keats, has to disregard this Yeatsian Keats. It is a Keats who, in a late-career, blank-verse dialogue of his own (within *The Fall of Hyperion, a Dream*), figured a severe mystery, Moneta—at once a "double" in dream psychology and an "anti-self" in her assault on Keats's cherished identity: poet. If there is no allusion in "Ego Dominus Tuus" to *The Fall*, there is a figural, generic affiliation: Dantean dream vision.¹⁸ And there is a hard debate, on Yeatsian mandates. The poet of Keats's *Fall* is an uncommon dreamer, who might well despair, even dissipate, at the challenge Moneta issues to "vision'ries," the tribe of Yeats and the Romantics he valued. To Moneta, they are all "dreamers weak," distinct from those who serve the world in action and seek "No music but a happy-noted voice" (canto 1, lines 161, 164); "thou are less than they," she rules (166):

What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
To the great World? Thou art a dreaming thing,
A fever of thyself—think of the Earth:
What bliss even in hope is there for thee?
(167–70)

The acid rhyme of *dreaming thing* parodies the fever of art. The quarrel of Keats's poet-petitioner with this inquisitor could well have set the stage for Yeats's HIC and ILLE.

Yet when HIC cues "Keats," it is not in this character but in the script of the setup:

And yet,
No one denies to Keats love of the world,
Remember his deliberate happiness.
(*Per Amica* 13)

HIC could have invoked the Keats who said, "I scarcely remember counting upon any Happiness," or who set a nightingale's singing "too happy in [its] happiness" against the poetry

of a world “Where but to think is to be full of sorrow / And leaden-eyed despairs”—dead end in sound no less than in sense.¹⁹ Keats’s accounting is brutal. Yet endorsing Hic’s warp on Keats, ILLE quarrels only to fine-tune the thread, not the pattern of premise:

His art is happy, but who knows his mind?
I see a schoolboy, when I think of him,
With face and nose pressed to a sweetshop
window,
For certainly he sank into his grave,
His senses and his heart unsatisfied;
And made—being poor, ailing and ignorant,
Shut out from all the luxury of the world,
The ill-bred son of a livery-stable keeper—
Luxuriant song. (13–14)

ILLE retails the cartoon voluptuary from the sarcastic 1818 reviews of Keats’s poetry: Keats, the immature, pathetic “Cockney,” only abject, not even in the sweetshop let alone Paris. Did ILLE blunder into a twinned “ill-bred”? Maybe; by 1919, this was revised to “coarse-bred” (*Wild Swans* 84). ILLE’s “Keats” is a class aspirant with no class, his poetry the sign and symptom. That three-line interval between “made” and “Luxuriant song” makes Keats’s art mere appendage to a character slam, a postscript of hollowed-out desire for material luxury.

Yeats elaborates this charge in his own voice some pages on in *Per Amica*, marking it the common dream of many first Romantics:

I imagine Keats to have been born with that thirst for luxury common to many at the out-setting of the Romantic Movement, and not able, like wealthy Beckford, to slake it with beautiful and strange objects. It drove him to imaginary delights; ignorant, poor, and in poor health, and not perfectly well-bred, he knew himself driven from tangible luxury; meeting Shelley, he was resentful and suspicious because he, as Leigh Hunt recalls, “being a little too sensitive on the score of his origin, felt inclined to see in every man of birth his natural enemy.” (25)

Not only is William Beckford—wealthy from the labors of unbeautiful and strange slaves on his sugar plantations—a peculiar citation, but this is also a Keats strained through Hunt’s filter, in 1850, and not unstrained by class sensitivity in Yeats himself. Keats was not “poor” and, as Hunt knows and Keats’s letters show, he was sensitive less to his middling origins than to Shelley’s well-meaning patronage, which could feel patronizing. More so because, as Yeats could have read in Hunt’s book, the poets’ “styles in writing” were “very different”: skeptical of Shelley’s “universality” and “Archimedean endeavors to move the globe with his own hands,” Keats exercised “his unbounded sympathies with ordinary flesh and blood” (*Autobiography* 2: 37). The class sensitivity was not the primal enmity; it was the scar of those first reviews, the ones Yeats so easily endorses many decades on. Drawing on Hunt, he elides and does not contextualize, so eager is he to box Keats outside the sweetshop, to make a hallmark of frustrated appetite.²⁰

On this ledger “Keats but gave us his dream of luxury”: sweet-mad boy, desire without fulfillment; no Dantean “conflict” or heart-rending “struggle” (*Per Amica* 26). Not willing to credit Keats’s art with any undeceived clarity, Yeats confects a Keats that deflects kinships—from felicitous phrasings, to disenchanted ironies, to measures of the unappeasable depletions of mortal life—that could well disturb a modernist’s self-defined difference. The “gravity” of art in “awakening from the dream” (29), for instance, has a critical alliance in Keats’s gallery of deluded and rebuked dreamers, Isabella, Madeline, Lycius, the poet of *The Fall*, and more. Yeats’s contempt of sentimentalists who “find their pleasure in a cup that is filled from Lethe’s wharf” (30) could well have drawn a draught from Keats’s “No, no, go not to Lethe” (so begins “Ode on Melancholy”). Yeats instead drafts an antitype to a “last romantic,” determined to be modern by not being Keatsian.²¹ There

is no necessity to play into Yeats's periodizing and stereotyping hands to notice this. The myth of "modernism" is as tendentious as its quarantining of Keats.

Yet Yeats kept worrying a close vibration of poetic habits. It sounds in the "last romantic" identification that he speaks in pride, in "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931":

We were the last romantics—chose for theme
Traditional sanctity and loveliness;
Whatever's written in what poets name
The book of the people; whatever most can bless
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme. . . .
(lines 41–45)

It was Keats who admired the old Greek poets for "leaving great verses to a little clan"—a line, said Yeats in 1903 (slightly misrecalling it), that had impressed him early on as the "happiest fate that could come to a poet" and would be a measure that he "constantly tested" for "my own ambition."²² It was Keats who praised Wordsworth for elevating "the mind of man" into the haunt and main region of his song (Preface xii), the frontier of his modernism.

The Keatsian drifts of language and theme in these Yeatsian scenes elude the sweetshop register, coming on a slant that occludes "like" recognition. As late as *A Vision* (1938), despite an appreciative allusion to "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in its opening paragraph (1), passion-tormented Yeats is still cordoning off Keats: "little sexual passion, an exaggerated sensuousness . . . intellectual curiosity is at its weakest . . . all is reverie" (134). The poster boys are the moony hero of *Endymion* and the sadly wasting loiterer of "La Belle Dame sans Merci." What Yeats elides is the intellectual, even skeptical pressure in Keats's figurings. *Endymion*, on the arc of its epic ambitions, wanes from springtime hopes to autumnal ironies and sometimes brutal parody. And "La Belle Dame," the autumnal ballad Keats wrote a year after *Endymion* appeared, while less brutal, is even more severe.

Keatsian Lines / Yeatsian Lingerings

Even a few turns of close reading can show how far away Yeats thought he needed to keep the reverberations of this story line from his own agons of sensuous temptation and its defeat. The fatal depletions of "La Belle Dame sans Merci" haunt Yeats's songs more than the sudden, magical resolution of *Endymion*'s wandering. Keats opens this ballad with three stanzas of an unidentified voice interrogating an odd spectacle, a knight-at-arms loitering where all life has withered or fled, his own draining away.²³ This is how it begins:

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?

The caution in *ail thee / palely* sounds again as the stanza rounds to this seasonal report:

The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Then, with adjectives pressing at interpretation, the question repeats, with alarm, at the top of stanza II:

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?

Something has *gone* to produce this "woe," and *haggard* hints a cause: commerce with a hag, "a wild or intractable person" (usually female) with a "'wild' expression of the eyes" ("Haggard"). Seamlessly, stanza IV begins, "I met a lady in the meads," to open a tale of an enchantress "Full beautiful," light-footed, wild-eyed, singing, and sighing. Stanza V ends:

She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

Every element of the romance follows from this impression, this seduction.

VI.

I set her on my pacing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
 For sidelong would she bend, and sing
 A faery's song.

VII.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna dew,
 And sure in language strange she said—
 "I love thee true."

In accumulation, Keats's words and syntax bare a delusion. The temporal conjunction "as she did love" ghosts a guess, *as if*, to expose "sure" as more wishful than certain, "language strange" strained into fidelity by desire. That the knight's tale enters the ballad so seamlessly, without a punctuated difference between his voice and the questioner's, arguably stages a quarrel of the mind with itself, self-reproach prompting a fevered explanation. "And this is why I sojourn here," the knight trails off (stanza XII), echoing but not dispelling the originating question.²⁴ At the core is an involute of cause and effect: is a faithless "she" the "why"? Or is the "knight-at-arms" at pains to fabulate a "she" from literary legend to take the rap for the scandal of his truancy from purposeful, manly life? Keats sounds *man* in the ballad only, and tellingly, as a syllable of that honey-poison, emasculating *manna*.

In 1902 Yeats was all too ready to label Keats a singer "of a beauty so wholly preoccupied with itself that its contemplation is a kind of lingering trance" ("Edmund Spenser" 248), implying he is no Keats. All too ready, because his "Song of the Wandering Aengus" looks like, sounds like, just such a preoccupied, lingering trance—and gorgeously. Its host volume is *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899), a title consonant with Pan's music, played on a pipe fashioned from the reeds into which the harried nymph Syrinx was transformed. Yeats's title word *Wandering*, though glancing at the Latin *errant*, is keyed to the poet's pen, an updated Pan-reed named a *wand*:

I went out to the hazel wood,
 Because a fire was in my head,
 And cut and peeled a hazel wand . . .
 (lines 1–3)

The wand becomes a fishing rod, and the silver trout it catches becomes a *glimmering girl*—the very soundscape of poetic music and poetic vocation:

. . . something rustled on the floor,
 And some one called me by my name:
 It had become a glimmering girl
 With apple blossom in her hair
 Who called me by my name and ran
 And faded through the brightening air.
 (11–16)

If she seems kin to Keats's *La Belle Dame*, Yeats's safety is to plot his singer against Keats's knight, bending an addiction to a *femme fatale* into a brightening that implies visionary quest.²⁵

Yet what ensues bodes a distinction without difference. A gap of time across a stunning interstanzaic space exposes the raptured, ruptured logic of a wandering that turns out to be perpetual, its hope for ever futuring. The girl does fade, and the wanderer is never more, and never less, than "winning near the goal" (the plight of the lover on Keats's *Grecian Urn*):

Though I am old with wandering
 Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
 I will find out where she has gone,
 And kiss her lips and take her hands;
 And walk among long dappled grass,
 And pluck till time and times are done,
 The silver apples of the moon,
 The golden apples of the sun. (17–24)

It is a phenomenal song, enflamed by its very poetry: a fire in the head issuing a glimmering girl, a brightening air, and, in vision, those silver apples of the moon, those golden apples of the sun. The "passionate feed their flame in wanderings and absences,

when the whole being of the beloved, every little charm of body and of soul, is always present to the mind, filling it with heroic subtleties of desire." This is Yeats writing in 1902 of what Spenser does not do ("Edmund Spenser" 234–35).

It is also what Yeats does do for the Wandering Aengus, with heroic sympathy. On the lure to wander, passionate Keats exercised more irony in "La Belle Dame" and imposed a more cautious halt in the run of enchantment to the end of "I stood tip-toe" (1817):

Was there a Poet born?—but now no more,
My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.
(lines 241–42)

In the syllabled contraction *wand'ring*, Keats rings and all but hands Yeats that link of *wand* to *wandering*. Yeats wants to stress Keats's errancy, but Keats, with poetry such as this, ironizes the Latin ghost of error in the spirit of wandering. Needing a forlorn Keats, Yeats tracks the Spenser of immediately "delighted senses" to the trickle-down Keatsian melancholy of "*Belle Dame sans Merci* and his 'perilous seas in faery lands forlorn'" ("Edmund Spenser" 235): the poet of depletion, betrayed of delight. Yeats makes his wanderer's "Song" not only not in the major key of "forlorn" but also so seductive in its devotion as to enlist readers as coconspirators. Who could not be enchanted by the rhymes, the hypnotic quatrains of *abcb*, the seductive anaphora of *And*, and its echoing in *ran-lands-hands*? The poetry is an echo chamber ever resounding:

something—some one—become-blossom
something-glimmering-brightening-wandering
hollow-hilly—I will-till
apple blossom-dappled silver-apples-golden
apples-old-golden

The music sustains what Helen Vendler calls a "reduplicative spell-casting" (108).²⁶

"This sort of 'self-generating' poetry is meant to mimic absolute command," Vendler

adds. Appreciating this illusion, I want to suggest a qualification, even an alternative, to "absolute," in a stress by privately coded grievance. "I will find out where she has gone" vocalizes the names *Will* and *Gonne* (in Irish sounding, *gone* and *Gonne* are homophones).²⁷ The year 1899, when "Song" appeared in *The Wind among the Reeds*, was also the year that Maud Gonne refused Will Yeats's proposal of marriage, for a second time. Such *nomen* investment is a famously poetic indulgence. The fount is Petrarch's pun-mad celebration of elusive Laura: *l'oro, l'aura, lauro* (gold, aura, laurel). It flows into Phil Sidney's *Astrophil*, Will Shakespeare's writing, with wry self-mirroring, in his sonnets of "will"; Donne's hymn to God that "thou hast done"; even sober Wordsworth's sounding of "will" and "worth" and "words" in *The Prelude*.²⁸ In Yeats's "Song," "Apple blossom" plays along: after his first meeting with Gonne (said Yeats in *The Trembling of the Veil*), she glowed in his head "like a goddess" and "luminous, like that of apple blossom through which the light falls" (13). After he published this recollection in 1922, it became a default paratext for "Song," its most intimate words whispering Yeats's cherished trance.

"All visionaries have entered into such a world in trances, and all ideal art has a trance for warranty," writes Yeats in 1906. The logic is entrancingly circular. Like Keats's abject loiterer, Yeats's wanderer sings a romance that suspends everything else. Such "delight," Yeats said, is conditioned by world-"weariness." And it is dangerous "to sojourn there" without that "ideal . . . warranty" ("Religious Belief" 109–10).²⁹ Yeats knew this danger in his original title: "A Mad Song."³⁰ "A fire was once within my brain," sings Wordsworth's "Mad Mother" (line 21). "And this is why I sojourn here, / Alone and palely loitering" is the Keatsian verbal ghost in the malady. What Yeats deflected was Keats's critique: the delusions of the knight, the self-listening alertness to "fairly lands forlorn" in "Ode to a

Nightingale": "Forlorn! that very word is like a bell / To toll me back from thee to my sole self" (70, 71–72). This toll is just as immediate a sensation in Keats's "Ode" as the trance.

No small part of the seduction of Yeats's "Song" is its phonic richness and fluidity, a music that feels enchanted rather than enchained. Decades on, in 1937, describing his need for "a passionate syntax for passionate subject-matter," Yeats included the syntax of "traditional metres": not formal laws but not "free verse" either ("General Introduction"; *Essays* 522–24). There was good Keatsian alliance in this pulse, which Yeats could sense in 1936 when he wrote in his introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, "I see Pope as . . . Keats saw him." Keats saw him this way in a satire of Pope's mechanical meters, for which he took a lot of heat in those sneering first reviews. Yeats had quoted Keats's very lines back in 1922 (without naming Keats), to explain his own disdain, in his early twenties,

of leaning towards the eighteenth century

"That taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied."³¹

Refusing this kind of hazing wand, Keats undertook his own schooling with a form marked by tallies and fits, and for which he had a career-long affection: the sonnet.

With no aim at publication, Keats wrote a sonnet in 1819 to work out the difficult fascinations of a form unbolted of prescribed patterns, prescribed business, but still formed:

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness;
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of Poesy;
Let us inspect the Lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet;

Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown,
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

Irked by the "pouncing rhymes" of the "legitimate" sonnet (Petrarchan), Keats was no warmer to Shakespeare's liberal variations.³² No free verser, he works metasonnetry, punning its cues: *the naked foot of Poesy* is meter blank of rhyme (even in this very line); *attention meet* audits meter; the *chord* of sounds puns the cords of rhyme patterning.

Keats's verse is unruly, spinning its puns to make its points. Take the first rhyme, *chain'd/constrain'd*. It is figuratively fit (picking up *pained*) for a Petrarchan quatrain. But Keats fuels his syntax against this promise, with a relaunch of the "If" clause at line 4, driving on the stressed syllables of the trochees at the front of lines 3 and 4, *Fetter'd / Let us*, with a charge from *to fit* (as if sprung from *Fetter'd*). The sentence does not come to rest, aptly, until *Poesy*. And this key word is either boldly no rhyme at all or a pointedly weak one, tripping up even the iambic pentameter.³³ "What moves me and my hearer is a vivid speech that has no laws except that it must not exorcise the ghostly voice" of "lyric metres" as "an unconscious norm." Except for "unconscious," this sounds like Keats theorizing his sonnet practice. But it is Yeats, on the contrapuntal relay of pattern and passion in voicing the stresses in the opening line of *Paradise Lost*, "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit" ("General Introduction"; *Essays* 524).

Keats's master simile is chained Andromeda's liberator, Perseus, whose winged steed, Pegasus, is iconic poetic imagination. In that satire of neoclassical prosody that Yeats liked, Keats mimics versifiers who "sway'd about upon a rocking horse, / And thought it Pegasus" (*Sleep and Poetry*, lines 186–87). How apt that a trapped Pegasus is the fallen

star of Yeats's "The Fascination of What's Difficult," composed in 1910—but in no composed sensibility. "Metrical composition is always very difficult to me," Yeats said with pride in 1922 (*Trembling* 86). In April 1910, he chided Thomas MacDonagh about dodging "the difficulty of rhyming" by resorting to "certain words in poetry which we do not use in speech" and syntactic "inversion" of no "positive value," just "because they get us out of a difficulty" (*Unpublished Letters* 1326).³⁴ "You do not work at your technic," he scolded another poet (and lover) in April 1936: "you take the easiest course leave out the rhymes or choose the most hackneyed rhymes, because—damn you—you are lazy . . . When your technic is sloppy your matter grows second-hand there is no difficulty to force you down under the surface difficulty is our plough" (*Unpublished Letters* 6532).

And so "The Fascination of What's Difficult." Yeats's Diary holds a prompt: "To complain of the fascination of what's difficult. It spoils spontaneity and pleasure, and wastes time" (Sept. 1909; Jeffares 106). But time is taken for a "complaint," a well-ploughed poetic genre. The title's ambiguous grammar is a blade in Yeats's plough. Is it fascination on what's difficult? Or is what's difficult a fascinating addiction? Is fascination the perverse modernist muse?

The fascination of what's difficult
Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
Spontaneous joy and natural content
Out of my heart. There's something ails our
colt

That must, as if it had not holy blood,
Nor on Olympus leaped from cloud to cloud,
Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt
As though it dragged road metal. My curse
on plays

That have to be set up in fifty ways,
On the day's war with every knave and dolt,
Theatre business, management of men.
I swear before the dawn comes round again
I'll find the stable and pull out the bolt.

In this energetically crabby poem, some undifficult couplets do Yeats's business: *plays/ways* (echoed by *days*), *men/again*. But how to hear *rent/content*: is it this hard rhyme (as in "Are You Content")? Or is Yeats meta-poetically shifting the sound casing of substance into a trochee, *content*: nature's content—a usage in the singular that was obsolete well before 1910 ("Content")? It's difficult enough to pause over.

The question registers in the main-rhyme fits of all those *t*-ended words. In his Diary, Yeats assigned himself a *difficult* task on this field, as if redeeming for modernism that eighteenth-century parlor game of *bouts-rimés* (cited in ridicules of Keats's rhymes):³⁵ "Repeat the line ending difficult three times and rhyme on bolt, exalt, coalt, jolt."³⁶ Yeats does *difficult* only once and slant-rhymes with three on this list: *coalt*, *jolt*, *dolt* (*rent* and *content* may also count). Line 4's *colt* intensifies the play with its double duty: closing a first quatrain-rhyme and initiating the next (Vendler 163). But where did that new rhyme word, *dolt*, come from? I think it is the ghost-writing of Keats's satirized "school / Of dolts" (*Sleep and Poetry*, lines 196–97).

In this pique, Yeats forgot one rhyme on his list, *exalt*, but it is there in spirit in this not-sonnet—perversely a line short, to be difficult about a formal expectation: the fugitive *exalt* may have flown in a fourteenth line to a world elsewhere.³⁷ That is one way to ghost a sonnet. Another is retroactively to recruit the title to make fourteen lines, resounding it in line 1 as a fastening troped to fascination, as if Yeats were staging etymology to secure his claim as Poet Laureate of What's Difficult. The missing rhyme returns, slant, as *exult/difficult*, to conclude Yeats's sixteen-line cheer, "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing":³⁸

Be secret and exult,
Because of all things known
That is most difficult.

The next step would seem a vision beyond material frustration.

This is "Sailing to Byzantium" (1927), the opening poem of *The Tower*. Yeats concludes a great early essay, "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" (1900), with a surmise that looks like a dress rehearsal for "Sailing": "voices would have told him how there is for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life," sufficiently potent to "lead his soul, disentangled from unmeaning circumstance and the ebb and flow of the world, into that far household where the undying gods await all whose souls have become simple as flame" (140–41). And so the disentangling from unmeaning to undying, twenty-seven years on, in ottava rima of sonnet-like organization:

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect. (lines 1–8)

The poet has left one world for another, defined by the negations toward which Yeats's reconstituted Shelley is pointed: *disentangled*, *undying*. The opening of "Sailing" is strung on, sung on, polarities: *young/old*, *dying generations* / *unageing monuments*. The first and last lines array the argument: "That is no country for old men. The young" versus "Monuments of unageing intellect." Yet for all the formal force of the unsummery summary couplet, the stanza's center swells an ode to sensual life, however timed out. In such contradiction, disdain of "[t]hose dying generations" sounds no less spiteful than self-important. "Why should they think that are for ever young?" is Yeats's thinking in "Her Vision in the Wood."³⁹ In this spite, Yeats managed to echo Keats on the illusion of eternity imaged in an ancient urn's static art,

a love "for ever young" ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" 27).

If the ageing sailor would rather be a monument than a mackerel, it is distinctly brave of Yeats to describe the "unageing" monument world as "the artifice of eternity" ("Sailing" 8, 24). The word "artifice" is overproductive: if it denotes art and artwork—and reflexively, the artistry of "Sailing to Byzantium"—the formal designation cannot rub off a smudge of "artificial." The "artifice of eternity" moreover holds another one of those double-dealing *ofs*: the fabrication of an eternity, and eternity's own fabrications. As carefully plotted as Yeats's vision is, the poetry is in the disturbances. Keats expresses such disturbance in the sighs of "faery lands forlorn" ("Ode to a Nightingale" 70) or, more monumentally, "Cold Pastoral" ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" 45), *forlorn* and *Cold* giving cues for critique. Both poets, brilliantly, devastatingly, involve a quarrel of artifices: the artifice of eternity romanced by the speaker (with a hint that eternity is in love with artifice, too) against the artifice of poetry that ironizes the romance. This is the protomodernist Keatsian ground that would become more visible to Keats's modernist readers, Yeats's contemporaries.

Searching in 1906 for "some dynamic and supersensualizing state of the soul" (Yeats coined the heptasyllabic adjective), he told Florence Farr that he wanted "a movement downwards upon life, not upwards out of life" (*Letters* 469). Tracing without recalling Keats's disenchantment with nightingale-song and art's cold pastoral, Yeats felt the struggle. How telling that he would reify Keats's index of an absence on that Grecian Urn: some "little town by river or sea shore, / Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel" (35–36). In that opening paragraph of *A Vision*, Yeats cited these lines for a town in Italy he knew, Rapallo. In a letter from Rapallo he echoed Keats's very words (*Letters* 738). For Keats, however, the little town isn't

a memory; it's a fantasy with a sequel that Yeats's allusion suppresses: with its "folk" for ever the urn's artifice, their history is left silent, desolate ("Ode on a Grecian Urn" 37–40). Nor is there any speaking from the urn's presence: its silent form can only "tease us out of thought / As doth eternity" (44–45). Yeats's eternity-minded sailor has been singing his soul out from a dying, heartsick body, and into a holy city, holy sages, eternal soul-song, released, it seems, from the eros of golden apples of the sun:

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come. (25–32)

A rhyme thread spells desire's perfection: the poet at the end of stanza II, who has "come / To the holy city of Byzantium," now sings, in chiasmus, in "Byzantium / Of what is past, or passing, or to come"—the final infinitives poised and posed for infinite possibility.

Yet this totemic golden bird is also a toy (a poetic one, too, in the phonic chiasmus of "hammered gold and gold enamelling") to amuse an imperial court. In such a world, Grecian art is not a tease of eternity but an

artifice of material luxury: a bit of a fly in golden marmalade. Amid the passionate syntax of an ideal, Yeats does not sort out the ironies any more than Keats does. Keats's odist may have struggled more, even, echoing the "full-throated ease" of a nightingale's song in "easeful Death" ("Ode to a Nightingale" 10, 52) or reviewing the Grecian Urn's forms of song and love "for ever young" as that "Cold Pastoral," indifferent marble survival in a human history of "woe" (47). What artifice, then, not of eternity but of presence in the world, can a poet envision?

Both Keats and Yeats answer with an artifice of mortality: the preposthumous epitaph that begets readers into its duration. Stanley Plumly has conjured the "Posthumous Keats" that haunts Keats throughout his career, and Jahan Ramazani has defined Yeats's perfected genre of "self-elegy" (*Yeats* 134–99). To read this spectral consciousness in young Keats and late Yeats is to confront a rhetorical and dramatic power in a figural ethics nearly too intimate for wording. Nearly. If, as Yeats wrote in 1913–14, "Works of art are always begotten by previous works of art," both he and Keats beget preposthumous self-elegies from their own antecedence, with Yeats's unearthing Keatsian materials and implications.⁴⁰ Here is Keats's gesture, a fragment (first published in 1898) that overrides elegy into a begetting agency:

This living hand, now warm and capable
Of earnest grasping, would, if it
were cold
And in the icy silence of the tomb,
So haunt thy days and chill thy
dreaming nights
That thou would[st] wish thine
own heart dry of blood
So in my veins red life might
stream again,
And thou be conscience-calm'd—
see here it is
I hold it towards you.⁴¹

*This living hand, now warm and capable
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
and in the icy silence of the tomb,
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
That thou wouldst wish thine own dry of blood
So in my veins red life might stream again
and thou be conscience-calm'd - see here it is
I hold it towards you*

Revising the legal burden, *mort-main*, Keats writes a living hand as both somatic and scriptive. How can we know the hand writing from the handwriting? A warm living hand becomes a cold dead hand, then handwriting coolly handed out, to leave *thy/dry* a destined rhyme. Keats's single sentence dilates its subjunctive ("would, if it were") to absorb its addressee ("that thou would"), with a double-thrust "So" (intensely; in consequence). Working a proposition into stark immediacy ("see here it is"), a stagy eloquence into colloquial intimacy, accretive syntax into spare monosyllables, Keats's lines conjure the present of writing into the future of reading: "here it is / I hold it towards you." Twice told, "it" grabs all the referents in the poetic field: living hand, cold hand, writing hand, handwriting. Keats's lines revive to survive in a claim staked with vampiric power. While holy bodies exude miraculous oil, "under heavy loads of trampled clay / Lie bodies of the vampires full of blood / . . . their lips are wet": that's Yeats's "Oil and Blood" (*Variorum Edition* 483). For Keats, red life streams again as read life, a gothic rival to Keats's sadly self-sentenced epitaph on his deathbed, "Here lies one whose name was writ in Water."⁴²

Change the surface to paper or stone, and you come to the hard-hearted end of "Under Ben Bulben" (*Variorum Edition* 640). In the penultimate stanza (V), Yeats's percussive tetrameters command a making in mimesis of poetry itself: "Irish poets, learn your trade, / Sing whatever is well made." Yet his most determined poems, remarks Michael Wood, tend to "a certain edginess in the formal activity," especially on the margins of a loss waged with "an intense feeling for form" (92–93). On such an edge is Keats ghosting writing into reading, the present into the future. If Yeats's aim at "well made," evokes *poet-maker*, the preposthumous epitaph that caps "Under Ben Bulben" is beyond well made. It is an inscription that sends poetry

into rhetoric, even a rhetoric of poetry. Yeats abjures the genre of cryptic Grecian urns and polite meaningless words:

No marble, no conventional phrase;
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut:

*Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!*

September 4, 1938

But the poetry arrests, not the least for its halting meter, with only one (arguably) of its twelve syllables unstressed: "*Cast a cold eye / On life, on death. / Horseman, pass by!*" The last line especially (first drafted as *Horse man* for four beats) refuses clip-clop dimeter.⁴³ The italicizing of this tercet in the newspapers of 3 February 1939 commands eyes to stop. Is this a rhetoric forbidding mourning? Or is it poetry's bidding? Or is it a distinction overridden? For the living to cast a cold eye on life is to be a bit dead-hearted; for the living to cast a cold eye on death is to defy its dominion. Not the indifferent equation, in 1919, of the Irish Airman's imminent farewell "In balance, with this life, this death" (*Wild Swans* 13), Yeats's command is a rhetoric of contradiction. To read "*pass by!*" is not to pass by. Roland Barthes's famed "death of the author" gets skewed with a difference, with a vengeance: not the fall of an author to wayward reading but an author invoking, constituting readers on the way, at his material tomb, and ultimately on his material page.⁴⁴

The total poem text includes that final date inscription, "September 4, 1938," a fourth line of sorts, poised or scored between the writing of poetry and the record for history. This part of the poem does not get translated to the material tombstone. Some drafts have a provisional quatrain-making first line: "Draw rain / rein; draw breath."⁴⁵ In this double draw—halt and inhale—the

drafts speak the *Siste viator* (“Stop, traveler”) trope of mortal epitaph. Whether by accident or design, this line did not get into print, and Yeats approved, endorsing the antonym. “Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait” is the genealogy, the scornful iteration of Shakespeare’s Timon on his “grave-stone.”⁴⁶ Back in 1910, Yeats described Timon’s self-epitaphing as one of those “moments of comedy” in Shakespearean “tragic-comedy” in which “character is defined” (“Tragic Theatre” 199–200). Tuned to the formal call of Yeats’s version for chiseling and print, Vendler describes the sensation of a quatrain (*abab*) stopped short of a fourth line primed to rhyme with “death” (97).

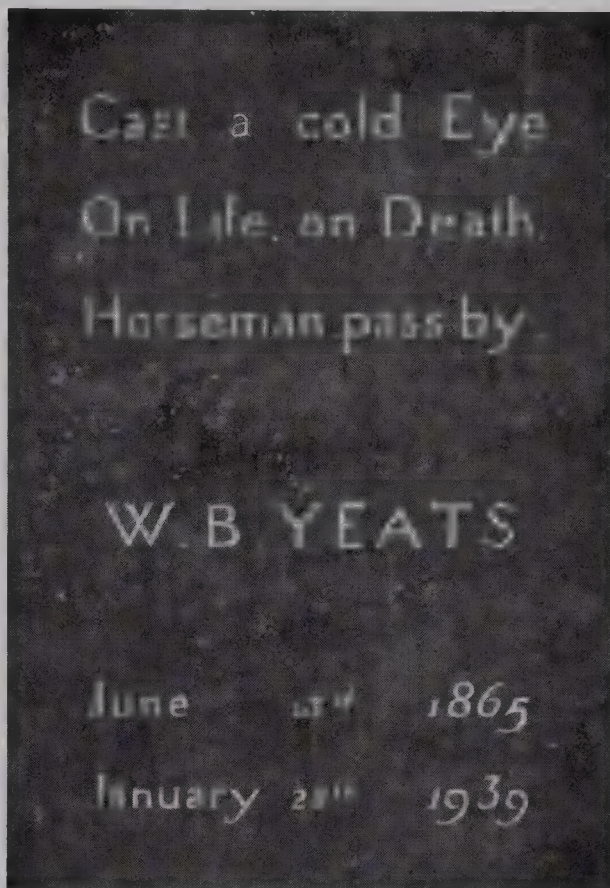
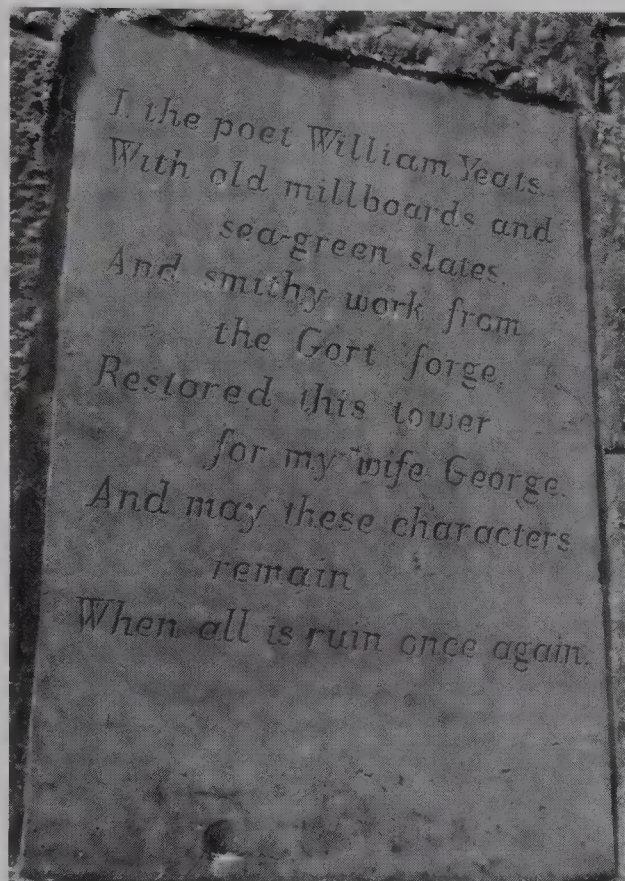
The inscribed date fills this ghost space, I have been proposing. But one manuscript shows another form of fourth line, one that slantwise imprints the author. Below the tercet that would be cut in stone, just left above the date, is written “WBY,” a last self-marking, and with a poetic punch: its *BY* repeats the epitaph’s last word, *by!*—an authorial self-rhyme for the reading eye.⁴⁷

National Library of
Ireland 13,593 [52],
14r; see *Last Poems*
xix–xx, 234–35.

What a return for a poet inheriting an eye-rhymed *Yeats/Keats!* Just a year before (1937), Yeats declared, “I have spent my life in clearing out of poetry every phrase written for the eye, and bringing all back to the syntax that is for ear alone”—what he called, a few sentences on, “character in action.”⁴⁸ He means *character* as dramatic persona. But *character* is also, in earliest sense and etymological core, chiseling or engraving, and in evolved sense, writing or signature handwriting—and so nicely witted for the epitaph-dictation.⁴⁹ “And may these characters remain,” Yeats writes in the only other poem of his (also an object in the material world) with the name “Yeats”: “I, the poet William Yeats” in “To be carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee.” “In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid” is the self-naming in “Under Ben Bulbin” (line 85). Both are also carvings on slate, in the spots designated. Yeats set his chisel to the hardest stone.

“It is time that I wrote my will,” Yeats began the final section of *The Tower* (1928), blending his forename into scriptive volition and its posthumous extension (12). The temporal frames for all these will-inscriptions are double-crafted: “these characters” and “these words” (and “my will”) are in the poetic present and cast into an unclosed, undisclosed future. Even as words cut in limestone in County Sligo under Ben Bulbin arrest and exhort readers not to read, Yeats writes the words to be read, cut in stone, pressed in books, in volumes, on the pages left behind. The most severe, most vivid, meeting of Yeats and Keats may be in these textures: a command to read that is embedded in and remanded to an uncertain, ultimately unknowable, temporality—now and in time to be.

V1
Under Ben Bulbin. Yeats is laid
in Drumcliff churchyard
on 14th Aug 1937
long years ago, a church stood near
By the roadside in a dark cross, high, & ancient
No marvel that the church was built by the great men, lords,
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words were cut
Can a cold eye
On life, on death?
Honor man from by
200-4 1930



Left: "To be carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee"; photograph by the author.

Right: Yeats's limestone grave marker in Drumcliff churchyard, under Ben Bulbin; photograph by the author.

In a kinship of generic unearthing by self-estrangement, both Yeats and Keats, at the end of lived history, stage poetry's most self-invested language, the autoepitaph, for characters in action. To read this relay on the field of literary history (how poets and poetry may survive) is to undertake the particulars of juxtaposition rather than hew to master narratives. A latent Yeats in Keats and a latent Keats in Yeats stir in conceptual figurings that the main current of reception for nineteenth-century "Keats" has rinsed from general recognition. Long Romanticism cannot be trumped or curtailed, then, as easily as Yeats in prose and pose might wish. His poetry knows better. Such are the circuitous routes—and bypasses—of literary history that there remain debts that cannot be acknowledged or repaid in kind but get productively reinvested in both the motifs and the very grain of making new.

NOTES

For careful attention, I thank Garrett Stewart, Peter Manning, Ron Levao, Michael Wood, and Dan Blanton.

1. So conscious was Yeats of Wilde's judgment that he never forgot Wilde's disapproval even of the color of his shoes (Ellmann 78).

2. Such are the master narratives of Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* and *Map of Misreading*. For a subtly differential refinement of influence, allusion, and intertextuality, see Elfenbein 1–12.

3. On the self-interested fabrication of "literary modernity," see de Man. *Romantic/Modern* are variable, relational descriptors. The vast discussion of what is and is not "Romantic"—whether genre, sensibility, initial periodizing, latest anthologizing—may be previewed in Lovejoy's prescient, controversial essay in a 1924 issue of *PMLA*; McGann; Wolfson and Manning; and Wolfson, "Our Puny Boundaries," in a *PMLA* forum on periodizing.

4. Keats's remarks are in a letter, published in Colvin's 1891 edition of his letters (237) and in Forman's 1895 edition of the letters (57); see also Wolfson's edition, *John Keats* 243, 130.

5. This phrase appears in a letter from late December 1817 (*John Keats* 78) that was first published in 1848 (*Life* 1: 93–94) and later in Colvin's 1891 edition of Keats's letters (48), and then in H. B. Forman's 1895 edition of the letters (57).

6. A signal broadcast was Leigh Hunt's essay "Young Poets" (1 Dec. 1816), featuring Keats, Shelley, J. H. Reynolds, and a nod to Byron.

7. Pethica rehearses this consensus in his introduction to the 2000 Norton Critical Edition of Yeats's works.

8. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations of Yeats's poetry follow *The Poems*, volume 1 of *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats*. I have supplied original dates and sites of publication where critically relevant.

9. For Yeats's appreciation of Blake in this aspect, see "William Blake and the Imagination" (173) and "William Blake and His Illustrations to *The Divine Comedy*" (176–77). Yeats's "Shelley" is limned in "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" (begun July 1899, partly published in the *Dome* in 1900, and published entire in *Ideas of Good and Evil* [1903]). An essay on *Prometheus Unbound* (1932; published in the *Spectator* in 1933, then in *Essays* in 1937), though vexed by the "incoherent" metaphysics of Demogorgon, hews to the same Shelleyan potential. For Yeats's "Romantic" filterings, see Bornstein's chapter in *Transformations*, chiefly on Blake and Shelley (developing his *Yeats and Shelley*), with a few pages on Keats.

10. *Trembling* 189. Yeats writes this just before he wonders if the cultural climate of the 1920s is "disturbed" by "the trembling of the veil of the temple" (portent of revelation)—recalling what Mallarmé had said of his epoch (191; cf. the preface). For "beauty" as a protected aesthetic in Yeats (with a Spenser-Keats genealogy), see Leighton 150–51.

11. "Art" 347. Yeats sees delicate sensibility in Shelley too (drawing on Hallam's 1831 essay on Tennyson as a "poet of sensation"), but he writes this up as a counter-cultural aesthetic principle. In an essay of 1904, Yeats pairs Keats more honorably with Shelley: "we call certain minds creative because they are among the moulders of their nation and are not made upon its mould" (*Irish Dramatic Movement* 64).

12. I cite the poem by page number. Dated in *Per Amica* "December 1915" (15), it was previously published in October 1917, in *Poetry*, and in November 1917, in *The New Statesman* and *The Wild Swans at Coole*.

13. For Pound's wit, see Ellmann 201.

14. This sentence concludes the next section, "Anima Hominis" (VIII; *Per Amica* 40), which opens with yet another Will, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (38).

15. "The Tragic Generation" (*Trembling* 215). Matthew Campbell pointed me to Yeats's record of Verlaine's remark (197). "The Tragic Generation" of fin de siècle poets (Edward Dowson and Lionel Johnson) fell to dissipation and despair, with no modern creative capital (*Trembling* 189; Yeats quotes the inset poetry's question for them).

16. A notably tricky Yeatsian *from* pivots the climactic question of "Among School Children": "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (64): *apart from*, *in distinction from*, or, contradictorily, *by means of*? For this productive ambiguity, see Hollander 37; Cavell 45–47.

17. Letter from Keats, 3 May 1818, in *Life* 2: 99; see also *John Keats* 130. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations of Keats follow *John Keats*. Letters are cited by page number, poetry by line or stanza number.

18. In Dante's *La Vita Nuova* a "Lord of Terrible Aspect" (Amore) brings "a new life" to the dreamer, announcing, "ego dominus tuus" ("I am your master"). Yeats quotes this passage in *Per Amica* 19, from Dante Rossetti's translation, which he admired (26).

19. Letter from Keats to Benjamin Bailey, 22 November 1817 (*John Keats* 71), in print since Milnes's edition (*Life* 2: 54); "Ode to a Nightingale" lines 6, 27–28.

20. Excerpting the dialogue ("What portion" to "Luxuriant song") at the end of book 3 of *Trembling* (154), Yeats replaces "The ill-bred son of a livery-stable keeper" with ellipses.

21. Yeats's mapping of "the transition from past to present as a literary shift from Romantic to modern," notes Ramazani, does not recognize that "relinquishing youth's dreamy innocence for a chastened maturity" is itself a "Romantic" paradigm (*Yeats* 138).

22. See *Letters* 406 and *Trembling* 10. The phrase that struck Yeats is from "Mother of Hermes," Keats's irregular sonnet, first published in 1848 (*Life* 2: 97). The line praising the old bards for "Leaving great verse unto a little clan" is italicized in Milnes's 1854 memoir for *The Poetical Works of John Keats* (xix).

23. I use the version first published, in 1848, in Milnes's *Life* (2: 268–70), "La Belle Dame sans Merci. A Ballad. 1819," because this was the best known in the nineteenth century.

24. The first stanza repeats, with slight variation on two words ("Though the sedge is wither'd"). For the ballad as internal dialogue, see Wolfson, *Questioning Presence* 296–300.

25. Bornstein hears Keats's ballad in "Song of the Wandering Aengus" and in another poem in the volume, "He Hears the Cry of the Sedge": "I wander by the edge / Of this desolate lake / Where wind cries in the sedge" (*Yeats* 56, 58). I would add "He Tells of a Valley Full of Lovers" (compare with the knight's dream, stanzas 10–11), "The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love," and "He Remembers Forgotten Beauty." From *The Rose* (1893), I would add "The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland."

26. I admire Vendler's whole account of phonic texturing (105–08).

27. The homophones would become more plangent than when the song was first published in *The Sketch* (1897). Ramazani's subtitled chapter, "A Woman Dead and Gon(n)e," though missing the double play here, catches *gone/Gonne* elsewhere (*Yeats* 17–26). In "Fallen Majesty" (1912), Yeats twice declares, "this hand alone, / . . . records what's gone. / . . . I record what's gone" (lines 2, 4, 6); then, more sadly, in "Her Praise" (1916): "I have gone about the house, gone up and down" (2), looking for anyone to whom to speak her name.

28. My essay on this effect in Wordsworth's autobiographical writing, "Will plus Words plus Worth: What's in a Name?," is forthcoming in *ELH* 84 (2017).

29. This is the logic of Bornstein's harsh sentence on "Song of the Wandering Aengus": the "metallic garden" of the vision issues "more a wishful thought than a possible form for [the singer's] exhausted imagination" (Yeats 78).

30. In *The Sketch*, August 1897. That madness is un-manning is sensed by Yeats's simlizing it to hysteria, the female ailment. The narrator of "Rosa Alchemica" (1914) experiences trances in which he "felt fixed habits and principles dissolving before a power, which was *hysterica passio* or sheer madness" (*Stories* 209), and playwright Yeats wanted "the passion of the verse" to come from an actor's effort of "holding down violence or madness—'down *Hysterica passio*'" (5 Aug. 1936; *Unpublished Letters* 6630), alluding to the deposed patriarch Lear: "*Hysterica passio*! down, thou climbing sorrow!" (2.4.55).

31. *Trembling* 65; Yeats is quoting from Keats's *Sleep and Poetry* (1817), lines 196–99.

32. This sonnet was first widely published in 1848, in *Life* 2: 303. For Keats's letter-text and poetry (May 1819), see *John Keats* 254–55. I use Forman's text of the poem here, as the one most historically proximate to Yeats.

33. For the muscular workout of Keats's sonnet, see Hollander 93–96; Wolfson, *Formal Charges* 170–72 and *Reading* 87–89.

34. References to *Unpublished Letters* are cited by accession number.

35. In *bouts-rimés*, players receive a set of words to craft into couplets. Keats was abused in the *Quarterly Review*, as Yeats might know, for "amusing himself and wearying his readers" with poetry in *Endymion* that not only read like "an immeasurable game at *bouts-rimés*" but also refused the "indispensable" rule that the result must "have a meaning" (19 [Apr. 1818]: 205–06).

36. See Jeffares 106. Ramazani is sharp on how conflicts in Yeats's aesthetic self-reflection go to extremes in "Fascination": constraint and chaos, rhymes and slants, lines and enjambment, demotics and high-art allusions ("Self-Theorizing Poetry" 68–69).

37. This is Vendler's fine perception about a sonnet completed in "airborne escape out the unbolted stable door of poet and Pegasus together" (164).

38. *Responsibilities* (1914) 34. In this volume, "To a Friend" follows "September 1913" (32–33), with the famous refrain "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone."

39. This is chapter 13 of "A Woman Young and Old," in *The Winding Stair* (1933).

40. "Art" 352. "Art and Ideas" was first published in *The New Weekly* 20 and 27 June 1914. Yeats reprinted it in *The Cutting of an Agate* (expanded ed., 1924), then in *Essays* (1924).

41. Editors date this mysterious fragment late 1819. See Forman 417; I give his transcription.

42. Reported by Joseph Severn, 1 June 1823 (Rollins 1: 273). Keats was ruefully echoing Shakespeare: "Men's evil

manners live in brass, their virtues / We write in water" (*H8* 4.2)—"in water" seeming the surface and the ink at once.

43. Pethica, in his introduction to *Last Poems*, scans these lines as dimeter (xli); Vendler, too (97).

44. Where Ramazani reads a speaker of "disembodied" authority, "outside of time," radically "self-alienated," in contradiction to the "rhetorical structure upon which the fiction of lyric self-identity is founded" (Yeats 14–49), I read a gambit of identity in rhetorical presence.

45. *Last Poems* 18–19, 24–25. The draft on pages 18–19 reads, "Draw rain. Draw breath," as if a command to revivify.

46. *Timon of Athens*, near the end of act 5. Yeats's echo is noted by H. J. Oliver (140).

47. *Last Poems* 234–35. "W. B. Y." is a signature autograph (e.g., *Per Amica* 98).

48. Yeats discusses this notion in "An Introduction for My Plays" (*Essays* 529, 530).

49. Yeats represents this sense of handwriting in the "characters" that ILLE traces on the sand in "Ego Dominus Tuus" (*Per Amica* 14–15). The sense of "engraving" appears in Shakespeare's *Timon* as a mysterious "character" on a tomb (act 5).

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Questions for R. K. Narayan

JUDITH BROWN

1. Can a world be unwritten?

THIS IS A QUESTION PERHAPS TOO PRETENTIOUS, AND CERTAINLY too abstract, for R. K. Narayan, the South Indian novelist best known for his modest wit and gentle optimism, yet it gets at the ways his fictional world quietly empties categories of meaning, loosens the ties of history, and drifts as if unburdened by knowledge of the contemporary world or its politics. The fictional landscape of Malgudi, created in Narayan's fourteen novels and many story collections, is best known for its dreaminess, its existence seemingly outside time. This apparent ahistoricity, along with the generally placid surface of his novels, has led to charges of an excessive niceness that represses or evades the brutal reality of colonial rule and its aftermath. Yet his novels, spanning the years 1935 to 1990, suggest historical and material modes of engagement with language that, even as they depend on irony and passivity, self-effacement and understatement, undermine the collusions of language and state; indeed, these passive modes of narration operate negatively as they undo, diminish, or void altogether their claims to certainty.

The question, as an open structure, does something similar. Preceding and suspending the certainty of answers, it creates the conditions for doubt and undoing. The seven questions of this essay explore submission, failed authorship, and the fate of letters in the volatile age of India's independence; they emerge from Narayan's fictional world and circle around the themes of language, colonial education, and narrative form. Imaginatively in conversation with the writer, these questions turn on writing and the conditions of its possibility, but they also extend beyond the work of the singular author to issues that today propel the study of literature at the edge, rather than the cen-

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ter, of political change. This essay, then, is a recuperative gesture for a novelist read widely but not always seriously; it is also a meditation on what Narayan once called the “authority of that ‘still small voice’” (Letter) or the power of quietist writing in a polemical age.¹ Narayan, I argue, undercuts the very grounds on which one might romanticize the town of Malgudi and its people by questioning and ironizing the political, historical, and aesthetic judgments that confront the colonial writer.

Writing in the English language in India had always been tied up with instrumentality and the machinations of empire. Young men from the very earliest days of the East India Company joined the enterprise at its lowest rank, writer, working in factories to further the aims of colonial commerce (Bernstein 7). From this time forward, writing in English would be bound to capital and the imperial will, a confusion that Narayan subtly satirizes throughout his career and especially in his postindependence novel *The Vendor of Sweets*, when a father is startled, even horrified, to learn that his son wants to be a writer:

“Writer” meant in [the father’s] dictionary only one thing, a “clerk”—an Anglo-Indian, colonial term from the days when Macaulay had devised a system of education to provide a constant supply of clerical staff for the East India Company. Jagan felt aghast. Here was he trying to shape the boy into an aristocrat with a bicycle, college-life, striped shirts and everything, and he wanted to be a “writer”! Strange! (21)

Ink-fingered bureaucracy offers nothing to the proud father who cannot imagine writing in any context but one with the taint of imperial transaction. To contribute to the literary arts is far outside the experience of the sweets vendor and will remain so, because his son is derailed by interests more mercenary than artistic.

Narayan reflected a great deal in print—largely in his weekly columns in *The Hindu* newspaper—about the possibility of writing

fiction in India, especially during the 1930s and 1940s as the country waged its campaign for independence. As he made his bold choice to become a professional writer, he was aware that he was living in a moment of historical transition,

... when all that a writer could write about became inescapably political. There came a time when all the nation’s energies were directed to the freeing of the country from foreign rule. Under this stress and preoccupation the mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution, and above all the detached observation, which constitute the stuff of growing fiction went into the background. It seemed to be more a time for polemics and tract-writing than for story-telling. (“Problem” 15)

What was lost, he suggests, was a detached and finely tuned rendering of the world—as well as a noninstrumental approach to literature. Aesthetics, in the face of the struggle for independence, was hardly an adequate arena for revolutionary energy. Yet the casualty was subtlety itself, as well as the humanizing, community-building activity of storytelling. Perhaps Narayan, a Brahmin from a part of the country that remained relatively remote from the independence struggle, was more attuned to aesthetic losses than those who suffered most the physical violence perpetrated by the colonial administration and its army. Or perhaps he understood that storytelling provided a culture strength and the capacity to endure, attributes too easily forgotten alongside the exigencies of political organization and change.

Choosing to write in English created further complications for Narayan and those others of his generation who made their literary careers in the colonizers’ tongue. In *The King-Emperor’s English; or, The Role of the English Language in the Free India*, for example, Mulk Raj Anand recognizes:

Long before the British quit India the question was being asked whether the English language, which, in the first instance, our alien rulers imposed on our country and which we later began to accept in increasing measure as a medium for conversation or writing, should be packed up, with much else, into the cabin trunks of the departing rulers and banished from our land. (1)

Raja Rao prefaces his novel *Kanthapura* by acknowledging that “the telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own.” Yet he goes on to say that English is not “really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before” (vii). Despite the challenges and questions their choice provoked, Anand, Rao, and Narayan made English the medium of their work. “[I]t was the only language,” claims Anand, “that came to hand in a difficult transitional period. And we wanted to say our say immediately, notwithstanding the political and moral censorship that inhibited our own languages” (16). Their choice entailed risk, including suspicion about their allegiances. One family friend, on hearing Narayan’s plans for a literary career, made the point succinctly: “Unwisdom! Unwisdom!” he cried (Narayan, *My Days* 88). There would be epistemic consequences, as this old fellow understood, both for Narayan personally (his primary concern) and for fiction writing in India. Knowledge and education would enter into Narayan’s novelistic imagination, as he created the fictional landscape of Malgudi, with the Albert Mission College and its Macaulayan mandate of aesthetic education figured prominently at its center. Aesthetic education, at least in Schiller’s idealistic formulation, should aid the progress of democracy by marrying the body’s impulses toward play with the drive toward form, yet in the British system, both at home and abroad, it rejected play in favor of the disciplined ideal of perfection. Writing with an uppercase W

should embody the rigid, formal principles of the British Empire: this world, the British proclaimed, would never be unwritten. The project of unwriting, then, carried far-reaching implications for writers from the colonies setting out to enter the canons of English-language literature.

2. Why is *d* a perfect letter?

Narayan and his fellow writers chose to make the master’s tongue the medium of their art, bringing to it the peculiarity of their own languages and habits of thought. The decision was not simply a creative incursion into the privileged domain of letters; it was also a scrambling of the linguistic codes on which British rule depended. Letters, in their singular form, carried cultural weight, as this question, taken from a British school examination, attests: Why is *d* a perfect letter? These nineteenth-century students—we might picture them bent over their books in the rigid formations of the exam hall—would hardly be invited to linger over such exam questions. Yet today the question seems more poetic than prosaic: what other than a poetic imagination might think about letters as having reached some lyric ideal, as being more than rudimentary indicators of knowledge about the language? What does it mean to imagine a perfect letter? One might take a poetic leap to conjure the possibilities—the perfect half-moon of the uppercase *D*, or the careful balance of the lowercase circle and its vertical stave—yet the attempt to pluck the perfect letter from a pageant of twenty-six contestants seems absurd. The question itself offers up language in its perfectability as a monument to the cultural authority of English as well as a tacit acceptance of its domination.

While D. J. Palmer, in *The Rise of English Studies* (22), and Gauri Viswanathan, in *Masks of Conquest* (135), both cite this exam question, they do not offer an answer. Besides, claims Palmer in his history, there is no

“scope for the critical imagination” in exam questions that test a student’s knowledge of linguistic perfection (22). Yet the imagination, outside the context of the nineteenth-century examination hall, seems the only possible ground for thinking through the perfection of a single letter. If we look to the historical moment that produces such questions, which express a simple faith in perfection, we discover ourselves on the confident ground of the mid-nineteenth century, when English was lauded as a language that had reached its apex. Palmer offers one account, from the very first professor of English literature at King’s College, Cambridge. Marking the department’s inauguration, Professor Thomas Dale made the following remarks in 1828 as he outlined the course of study, including the history of the language, from its “origin, formation, progress, and perfection”: “[W]e may assume that a language to whose stock of words no material addition has been made for upwards of two centuries, may now be accounted *stationary*, or perfect in proportion to its capacity” (19). The language, static in its marmoreal finish, had presumably arrived.

The perfection of English was not a question concerning only the English nation; it of course affected India under the rule of empire. When English education policy with its “unbounded faith in examinations” (Palmer 16) was transported to India, it became more stringent as a way to protect the language:

As a time capsule for English culture, India provided an ideal setting. The structure of Indian society, its multiple languages and multiple religions, eliminated some of the chief difficulties encountered in England in the preservation of a true national culture. . . . Linguistic stratification of classes permitted English high culture to be maintained in all its purity without the erosion that was occurring to polite literature in England. (Viswanathan 116)

In England, Viswanathan argues, there was a sense that the language suffered from its us-

age by all classes. In India, the usage could be controlled: “The control exerted through the formal institution of education further exploited the structure of Indian society to prevent English from degenerating into sheer vulgarity as in England” (117).

If in England English had reached its summit and achieved a kind of sculptural (or sepulchral) perfection that was now threatened by changing class structures and the linguistic change that inevitably resulted, in India the language might be better monumentalized, bolstered by the vast Indian civil service and system of English education. What better way than through attention to literature? Soon after Dale’s lecture on the perfection of the language, Macaulay delivered his “Minute on Education,” which reached its frothy height with the claim that “a single shelf of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.” This was the basis of the English Education Act of 1835, whose effects continued to reverberate through India one hundred years later, when Narayan began his career.

One might picture a younger Narayan, quaking as he approached the dreaded exams that marked his progress through the Maharaja’s Collegiate High School. His trepidation at writing the university entrance exams was justified: he failed spectacularly. “I had failed where I was most confident—English. I failed so miserably and completely that everyone wondered if I was literate at all” (*My Days* 53). “That horrible man, the question setter” (53) had scuttled his plans, and so the disappointed Narayan retreated into literature and the “luxurious sadness” (60) of tragic endings, reading anything—“an indiscriminate jumble” (58)—that might plunge him into the depths of emotion. Yet the writer would develop, attend a university, and become exquisitely aware of the ideological purposes that the English language and the literary canon served. Indeed, *The English Teacher*, published in the years immediately preceding

independence, should be read as an explicit statement about aesthetic education, both in Schiller's idealistic sense of the power of aesthetics to draw us closer to freedom and in Macaulay's reinterpretation of aesthetics to further cultural supremacy. The novel places us on the grounds of the Albert Mission College, where our protagonist, Krishna, the English teacher, halfheartedly teaches the greats of English literature, from the Renaissance through the Romantics. His boredom, stemming from his alienation from the educational system, is clear from the start: he sleepwalks through teaching, does it by rote, hardly prepares, and largely reads aloud to his classroom of equally bored students. The education he offers weakly extends colonial values but enlivens no minds, particularly his own.

In the novel's opening pages, the outraged school principal summons his teachers, including Krishna, to decry the degeneracy of the student body: "Can you imagine a worse shock for me? I came across a student of the English Honours, who did not know till this day that 'honours' had to be spelt with a 'u'?" . . . He began a lecture on the importance of the English language, and the need for preserving its purity" (5–6). Does the *u* in *honours* matter? If language was to remain stationary, thus buttressing the firmament of British rule, its usage by colonials represented an ever-present threat, as Principal Brown understands (and as Homi Bhabha, better than anyone else, has explained). Those *d*'s and *u*'s thus bear the weight of a civilization on their curves and serifs. Although we might reflect on the aesthetic virtues provided by the letter *d*, the question of its perfection illuminates the provisional nature and historical contingency of knowledge: we cannot tell what makes *d* perfect, because the very premise of the question, the perfectibility of a language or a letter, evades our grasp. This is language monumentalized and driven to death: Narayan's novel begins on these grounds and works toward unmaking the codified authority of language.

3. Is this naïve or ironic?

Not everyone loves this avuncular figure. Narayan's name elicits fond nods, as well as something more dismissive. He is associated with children's literature, a popular television series (*Malgudi Days*, aired in the 1980s and based on his stories), and with his longevity as the grand old man of Indian letters. But he has also been the subject of barbed criticism. "The number of allegations levelled at R. K. Narayan for culturally diluting the 'Indian-ness' of his stories—universalizing the classic *Malgudi* into an easily-accessible mixture of *Everyman* and *Our Town*—are legion," writes Ian Almond (146). Most damning is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In her collection of essays *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, the formidable critic repeatedly dismisses his writings, implicitly for their quietism, explicitly for the ways his avoidance of conflict makes him the milquetoast author for the Western multicultural classroom.

The question is Spivak's—"Is Narayan naïve or ironic?" (530)—in a frustrated aside about the writer. Citing his "general niceness" (530), his avoidance of conflict, and his "limpid" prose catering to "a casual unmoored international audience" (77), Spivak finds in his writing the worst kind of cultural acquiescence as he leads his reader on the "jolly safari" of the English language in India (36). It is his approach to literature and literary history that provokes her question, which is one worth thinking about. His naïveté, at least in her terms, may be easily traced: not only does the writer inhabit a past that she cannot abide but also he longs for a community relation that she sees fraught with pernicious ideological ties. The implicit reader of Narayan's work is a tourist who has no understanding of or interest in the wider network of relations in which the work takes shape; instead, invited to engage in a fantasy of Indian life that sidesteps the real conditions of poverty, that reader-tourist can enjoy the sights without the burden of knowledge. Adding to this sense of

blindered optimism, Priya Joshi writes, “R. K. Narayan’s prolific novels and stories are realist portraits of the imaginary rural town of Malgudi, arguably containing little demonstrated sensibility to wide-scale reform” (210). Joshi does not explicitly condemn Narayan, but one senses that she, and critics more generally, recognizes his failure to tow a more trenchant political line. Narayan foresaw this complaint.

Spivak’s question suggests that naïveté is inexcusable whereas irony is merely irritating. The naïf is complicit, willing to avert his gaze, to pretend things are otherwise. He is primitive, innocent, lacking in sophistication, and, while he may be expressive (certainly modern painters in India, including Jamini Roy and Rabindranath Tagore, exploited the expressive range of the naïve), his passivity is contemptible. Spivak answers her own question: Narayan is unforgivably naïve in a world that demands careful, knowing responses to ideological problems. She encourages a more instrumental view (“[I]nstrumentalize the essays that follow,” she writes [34]) and promotes the imagination in its capacity to undo the legacy of the European Enlightenment. Strangely, she nowhere mentions *The English Teacher*, even though it does the kind of sabotage her work so pointedly advocates.

Writing in English, it is also worth noting, placed Narayan in a global commercial arena characterized by competition and the struggle for recognition. One might imagine the author’s stance strategically (and thus at least somewhat instrumentally) in the ways that Pascale Casanova has envisioned: “In order simply to achieve literary existence, to struggle against the invisibility that threatens them from the very beginning of their careers, writers have to create the conditions under which they can be seen.” Casanova does not consider the difficulty of colonial writers, whose claim to the work of art—that is, to literary value—is still, at times surprisingly, disputed; she argues however that writers should engage the conditions of recognition

by inventing complex strategies that profoundly alter the universe of literary possibilities. The solutions that little by little are arrived at—rescued, as it were, from the structural inertia of the literary world—are the product of compromise; and the methods that they devise for escaping literary destitution become increasingly subtle, on the levels both of style and of literary politics. (177)

Aesthetic form too must play the market, developing strategies, even politically quietist ones that might offer new arrangements of the literary world.

This conundrum does not go unnoticed by Narayan. *The Vendor of Sweets* stages the economic and cultural struggle for visibility in comic terms when Jagan’s son, having returned to India from a creative writing program in the United States, extols the money-making power of a new invention: a novel-writing machine. Just key in character names and a few other details, and voilà, you have a novel. Says the aspiring entrepreneur to his father, “[T]hese are not the days of your ancestors. Today we have to compete with advanced countries not only in economics and industry, but also in culture” (59). It is competition, then, that defines for him the creative writing process. His labor-saving device promises to write the writer out of literary production altogether. The novel-writing machine is an ironic invention offered as commentary on books as commodities to be exchanged on a market that makes the writer obsolete. Narayan returns, with curious frequency, to such obsolescence, through his depictions of failed writers, foolish writers, or wannabe writers; that is, the writer is figured in the negative, becomes a figure of the negative. We see that Jagan was right: writing has not escaped the East India Company. Writers dream big but produce hackneyed work, do not finish their writing, or do not even write at all. And in his self-representations, Narayan emphasizes all the ways he avoids the labor of

writing. Why does he link writing with passive, feckless, or self-negating characters?

Narayan, especially cognizant of the structures that confined and limited the play of his particular imagination on the page, writes deceptively simple prose defined, nevertheless, by the complications of irony. Narayan is, in fact, habitually ironic, even as this mode—as Spivak’s exasperated question bears out—is itself elusive, unpredictable, and difficult to pin down. The challenge of defining the rhetorical mode of irony, contemplated from Socrates through postmodern theory, stems at least in part from the unstable relation between text and reader: irony depends on a certain canniness in its interpretation and is thus subject to any number of contingencies. It engages complication, refuses to take itself seriously, insists that one thing can also mean another. The difficulty faced by any attempt to know irony is at the basis of Paul de Man’s influential account in “The Concept of Irony.” Traditional definitions of the term, de Man tells us, include multiple meanings, the movement between literal and figurative, and the gesture of “turning away,” “though one feels that this turning away in irony involves a little more, a more radical negation than one would have in an ordinary trope. . . . Irony seems to be the trope of tropes, the one that names the term as the ‘turning away’” (164–65). The trope itself mirrors the stance taken by Narayan: his naive turning away from politically pressing narratives, the circumambulatory pacing of his prose. Radical instability ensues in any attempt to theorize the working of his narrative, recalling the reliance of Linda Hutcheon on the negative prefix when she describes irony as “the unsaid, the unheard, [and] the unseen” (9). Thinking about irony will always be subject to irony’s negative modes, which, de Man adds, “will always be interrupted, always be disrupted, always be undone by the ironic dimension which it will necessarily contain” (179). Hardly a simple mode of writing, then, irony

turns on negation, on undoing, on the gesture of turning away from one system in order to suggest the shadow of another.

Learning to perceive the shadows—the tonal variations of Malgudi and not simply its placid surface—is the first lesson taught by *The English Teacher*. One comes to recognize the challenges hiding in plain view, in the comic modes and self-effacing voices of Narayan’s characters. De Man suggests that irony “is the radical negation, which . . . reveals as such, by the undoing of the work, the absolute toward which the work is under way” (183). Now, absolute destruction might seem too strong when discussing the work of Narayan, but could not radical negation be an element of his famously ironic style? Radical negation does not, of course, necessarily imply radical politics. Hutcheon categorizes irony as “trans-ideological” (9). If it does not offer a political stance, what does it do? “Irony consoles and it promises and it excuses,” says de Man (165). In Malgudi it does this and more, creating space for rethinking, revising, and unwriting.

This rhetorical mode shares something with Schiller’s attempt to reinvent the political landscape and thus approach freedom through an educated experience of the aesthetic. His concept of play as an imaginative possibility where contradictory or antagonistic impulses can intersect, cross over, or otherwise meet without the violence of direct confrontation is especially helpful in thinking through Narayan’s writing—repeatedly described as quiet, charming, subtle, gentle, and passive—at the height of the struggle for Indian independence. Oppositional impulses in Malgudi are expressed through ironic narration; irony will offer a way for Narayan to simultaneously embrace and turn away from overwhelming social and political conditions, as well as to negate a conception of the novel that duplicates or reproduces those conditions.

Does irony acknowledge the dynamic mobility of literature to resist conscription, as it were, and to operate in more subtle are-

nas than those requiring active, warlike involvement? Balachandra Rajan's definition of the subtlety inherent in literature more aptly describes Narayan's narrative mode than Spivak's dismissive "jolly safari": "[T]he power of literature [is] to flow around ideologies, to acknowledge and even propitiate their powerful presences but [also] to interrogate them through circumvention rather than through the simpler forms of protest" (9). *Circumvention*: it is a precise word to describe Narayan's wit, his skirting around the difficult topics that nevertheless remain in sight. As Narayan plays with the capacities of the English language to express Indian village life, he circumambulates, as it were, the elephant of empire. Is he naïve or ironic? He is both, employing naïveté as he turns away, undoing the very structures that the naïf appears to support. The terms of Spivak's question suggest that the naïf knows nothing while the ironist knows all: Narayan's fiction will, with all the evaporative power of irony, reject these premises and question the epistemological privilege of knowing itself.

4. Why not write poetry?

I sat in my room, at the table. It was Thursday and it was a light day for me at college—only two hours of work in the afternoon, and not much preparation for that either. *Pride and Prejudice* for a senior class, non-detailed study, which meant just reading it to the boys. And a composition class. I sat at my table as usual after morning coffee looking over the books ranged on the table and casually turning over the pages of some exercise books. "Nothing to do. Why not write poetry? Ages since I wrote anything?" My conscience had a habit of asserting itself once in six months and reminding me that I ought to write poetry. (English Teacher 45)

Krishna, from the outset of the novel, has fancied himself a poet in need of both discipline and a suitable subject. He creates a

new regimen, sets aside time to write, yet the words rarely come, though he imagines the brilliance of the poetry he will one day write, the poetic legacy he will leave behind. He fritters away his time, casually flipping pages and accomplishing little. His question, cast in the negative, is perhaps rhetorical, even if many answers spring to mind—a lack of talent, the weight of a foreign cultural tradition, his reluctance to make the effort. There are so many reasons *not* to write poetry. But the negative casting of the question, doubled in its own ironic asking, makes visible what remains unwritten.

The scene, set up to be self-mocking, culminates in an ironic takedown: "To-day I was going to make up for all lost time; I took out my pen, dipped it in ink, and sat hesitating. Everything was ready except a subject. What should I write about?" (45). His wife suggests he make her his subject. Accepting the challenge, he pens from memory thirty lines of Wordsworth's "She Was a Phantom of Delight," pretending they are his. "Aren't you ashamed to copy?" she says after she realizes these lines come not from her husband but from her *Golden Treasury* anthology. "No," he replies. "Mine is entirely different. [Wordsworth wrote] about someone entirely different from my subject" (47). Is he being naïve or ironic? Is the poem different if it has a different address, a different object as its phantom? This exchange raises questions about original and copy and situates those questions in the context of colonial India and its practice of aesthetic education. Krishna insists that his repetition of Wordsworth can never be Wordsworth: the introduction of a new subject in a new context absents or negates the original poem's center. Reciting Wordsworth's poem transforms his wife, Susila, and envisions her as the phantom of writing. And this is what she will become.

Is it significant that Krishna never really finishes a poem in the novel? Why not have him write poetry? The obvious reading is

that his writing can only reproduce the colonial master, that it will be inevitably inferior and comic in its simple mimicry. Yet the will is there. Krishna has big plans for a poetic future, especially when he dreams of the home he will buy with his wife: "A room all for myself where I can sit and spin out great poetry" (51); "I shall write immense quantities of poetry when I settle here, I think" (60). Although his grand oeuvre exists only in fantasy, it significantly defines his sense of self. He is moved by the English canon and aesthetic experience generally (he is entirely swept into the fury of *King Lear* as he reads it to his students), coming closer to what Christopher Nealon defines as the poetic, something that is vaster than stanzas on the page:

I am moving across language that shifts from thinking of poetry as the name for a kind of thing made by poets—either literal writers of poems or artists generally—to thinking about aesthetic experience as marking a kind of human capacity, whether or not it produces traditionally aesthetic objects. (868)

What is poetry good for?, Nealon asks, and he finds as a partial answer the unrealizable in it:

"[U]nrealizability" suggests that the significance of poetry is not captured by the language of making or purpose but that it is a type of activity that puts pressure on the social meanings of both . . . this demurrer from instrumentalization opens up a space of bewilderment about the present that is potentially critical, even as it risks valorizing uselessness as such. (869)

Is this not the ground of the question that Krishna asks, of the failed pursuit that nevertheless inspires and informs him? His failure to write poetry leaves his future as a writer uncertain. There is something more at stake here, and Narayan signals a shift in the notion of writing that will come with the death of Krishna's wife.

5. What is the fate of letters?

The English Teacher recounts both a tragedy—the sudden illness and death of Krishna's wife—and a ghostly visitation from her through writing, which brings with it a profound reimagining of aesthetic education in India. Krishna eventually discovers a way to empty Wordsworth's poem and to find a new, as yet unwritten place from which to write India. He learns by absenting himself, by giving himself over to the otherness in language. He must unlearn, unmake, and detach from the rational languages he knows. The central event, then, in Narayan's autobiographical novel, is this turn away from realism, fact, or materiality and the turn toward a phantom who offers writing as a passive encounter with the otherworldly or foreign. Only in this turn does poetry become possible. One thinks of the gaping hole at the center of Virginia Woolf's novel of grief, *To the Lighthouse*, when Mrs. Ramsay dies, suddenly and without warning. The death at the heart of that narrative, as in *The English Teacher*, disrupts the novel's, and the reader's, equilibrium. Time passes yet stands still in Woolf's account of a ten-year period punctuated by the excision of lives, marked by square and brutally felt brackets: "[Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched out his arms, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty]" (128). The sentence, in all its awkward syntax, demotes the subject and with it its sentimental attachments. All that is left is the empty house, haunted by its past and standing like a dilapidated monument at the edge of a grave:

Nothing it seemed could break that image, corrupt that innocence, or disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence. (129–30)

Death and the passage of time reorient space, folding the noises of life into the absence that, while once a room or house, is now a beautifully realized figure for loss and for the insignificance of human lives against a vast and indifferent universe.

Krishna, too, discovers earthly indifference to the death of his wife. Death in this novel, as in Woolf's, will make formal claims on the novel, demanding a different mode of narration in its wake. In time Krishna turns to a less tangible representation of his wife, as Lily Briscoe turns to her painterly representation of Mrs. Ramsay, as if desire itself could bring these women back in every form but the material one. Lily turns to abstraction, just as Narayan turns away from literary realism to a form of representation that may be termed supernatural, magical, or fantasmatic. Introduced to a psychic medium who helps Krishna make contact with his dead wife, he begins to communicate with her through writing, first with the medium's acting as amanuensis, then directly. Writing brings his wife back to him, vaguely and uncertainly, and over a long period of time he feels the continuing presence of Susila. The break in the novel—from the domestic narrative that defines its first half to the death and psychic events that define its second—marks a shift from realism to abstraction, to a leap away from the visible known world to another, a world opened by experimentation and the willingness to let go of rational structure. Just as Woolf ventures away from the human in "Time Passes," part 2 of *To the Lighthouse*, Narayan moves beyond the limits of the human world. Krishna finds himself not immersed in broad universal time, however, but situated outside the limits of reason and in the presence of his spirit wife.

A letter determines his fate. Engulfed by grief—"The days had acquired a peculiar blankness and emptiness" (97)—he meets a boy on the street: "Are you Krishna of the English section? . . . Here is a letter for you" (105). The letter is from a stranger, the boy's father:

Dear Sir,

I received this message last evening, while I was busy writing something else. I didn't understand what it meant. But the directions, address and name given in it are clear and so I have sent my son to find out if the address and name are of a real person, and to deliver it. If this letter reaches you, (that is, if you are a real person) please read it, and if it means anything to you keep it. Otherwise you may just tear it up and throw it away; and forgive this intrusion. (106)

The following message comes from Krishna's wife, who wishes to communicate with Krishna using this man as a medium. It leads to Krishna's reconnection with his wife through the messages she sends by the stranger, who describes Krishna as "the unknown man for whom a letter was sent" (110). What better way to describe the colonial subject on the receiving end of a foreign message? Krishna eventually meets the man who has been scrawling out Susila's messages from the spirit world: "The blank sheet was filling up. Letters and words danced their way into existence" (114). The words come with a fury (the pencil tearing at the page) and are filled with errors that test Krishna's faith: "Do you remember the name of our child?' The pencil wrote: 'Yes, Radha.' This was disappointing. My child was Leela" (115). Precision, Susila later explains, is an earthly concern.

There is a question to which the ghost repeatedly returns. Krishna burned most of Susila's letters in the hope that he might expunge his grief. But she insists that some remain: "At every sitting she urged me on to look for her sandalwood casket and the fourteen letters" (127). The letters are never found, although the possibility and uncertainty of their existence are thematically central. The dream of the letters must remain unfulfilled, and the point is not lost that they represent negation. Krishna burned them, but his ghost wife claims they have survived. We cannot know for sure if they exist or not. In the novel, they exist in the form of absence, a

hopeful absence, an absence that is part solace, mixed with confusion and uncertainty in what we might now see as a characteristic Narayan formulation. What is the fate of these letters? What, Narayan implies, is the fate of Indian letters more generally? What has been lost? What remains unwritten? What remains to be discovered?

The possibility of the letters as a material sign of Krishna's past happiness, rendered immaterial, becomes a lingering hope, a reason to continue. Their presence-absence hovers over Krishna like the uncertainty of fate itself. Longing now defines the letters, but so does something lighter, more laughable. He creates new possibilities for himself in letters, especially as he contemplates his resignation letter from the Albert Mission College:

I would send in a letter which would be a classic in its own way, and which would singe the fingers of whoever touched it. In it I was going to attack a whole century of false education. I was going to explain why I could no longer stuff Shakespeare and Elizabethan metre and Romantic poetry for the hundredth time into young minds and feed them on the dead mutton of literary analysis and theories and histories, while what they needed was lessons in the fullest use of the mind. This education had reduced us to a nation of morons; we were strangers to our own culture and camp followers of another culture, feeding on leavings and garbage. (178)

Here we have Krishna, perhaps Narayan too, amplified, politicized, and polemical. But this letter is not sent: Krishna revises and rewrites it many times, finally settling on this: "Dear Sir, I beg to tender my resignation for personal reasons. I request you to relieve me immediately . . ." (179). His letter turns away from rage, speaking the avoidant and small-scale language of a personal matter. Krishna, Narayan underscores for us, is not a revolutionary hero or a hero of any sort. Rather, he chooses the quiet and conflict-free path. The

unwritten letter of resignation speaks with a volume that is dialed up by our frustration and by the irony of its being unsent. It speaks in an unexpected voice, a voice from the shadows, a voice that Principal Brown, and indeed generations of readers of Narayan's work, has not heard. This is the only moment I know in Narayan's fiction where open political commentary interjects, even as it is distanced, layered, ironized, and silenced by a plot that will not have the colonial authority read it.

That silence has a lot to do with Narayan's narrative stance. We cannot know, he seems to say, the fate of letters that are lost or that are still seeking their proper form. The author turns away from the Romantic sensibility that has governed Krishna's approach to language. Demoting the ego, he moves away from any notion of a knowing or action-based hero. The secular and skeptical voice of the English teacher is altered, even evacuated, as he finds himself confronting a new crisis, one associated with language and with his relation to the past.

6. What claim does the past have on the present?

Or, how nostalgic are these novels? Malgudi might be said to emanate from the kind of longing that Susan Stewart describes as the "social disease of nostalgia" (ix). In this view of nostalgia, sadness perpetually seeks its lost object in a Lacanian circuit of desire. The "desire for desire" (23) keeps the nostalgic suspended in an ideological web of longing, yearning for that mythic space before difference sundered the dream of unity, authenticity, and pure, unalienated language.

Stewart's beautifully compressed argument about the animating dreams that propel nostalgia is immediately convincing. But does Malgudi suggest a wider desire to restore an enchanted past? Narayan's embrace of the past through the hazy streets and back alleys of Malgudi stirs fond memory and seems to

remove us from the political urgencies of the present. Yet resistant to change, the town refuses teleological logic: time is not a critical concern among its loafers and its lives lived in slow motion. The novels move themselves out of the determining framework that time imposes, so that the division into tenses to separate past, present, and future becomes unimportant. In many ways this defiance of the logic of industrial, secular time, which too is a legacy of the British,² is antimodern. Except that Malgudi incorporates the demands of the working world, the recognition of scheduled time, even as it leaves space for multiple conceptions of time. The presence of the railway station (the origin of Malgudi, Narayan has explained) brings timetables into account, whether characters abide by them or not. Krishna eventually takes himself out of measured time when he quits his job. The novel ends as he makes himself independent from the colonial structure, choosing to join a small, freewheeling school with no structure to speak of, save for the thatched roof, the mud and bamboo walls, and the story hours that fall at any hour. Personal decisions reverberate, or promise to reverberate, in this microversion of noncooperation. There may be an effect of timelessness in Malgudi, but history always presses in on the town's inhabitants. The reader is reminded of changes in the quiet patterns of Malgudi life: a Quit India rock goes through a distant window in *Swami and Friends*, Gandhi inspires love and struggle in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, a chai seller's fortunes change after independence in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, and the English teacher ultimately rejects English education.

Is Krishna's Malgudi nostalgic? Consider Svetlana Boym's distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgias—one a cover for absolutist strivings (for a pure religion, a pure nation, etc.), the other more open to the ambivalence that constitutes longing for a different time or space. Reflective nostalgia incorporates both yearning and irony, loss

and its aftermath; the sense of pleasure in the backward glance is still thoughtful, recognizing limitation and the complication that a fantasy of return must remain a fantasy. The ache here is sought after, indulged, and contextualized, even if the contextualizing places us back in a less indulgent present. Not all nostalgics seek to live solely in the past, after all.

Boym stresses the wistfulness at the heart of the "off-modern," which is an accurate enough description of Narayan's career:

[T]here is a tradition of critical reflection on the modern condition that incorporates nostalgia. It can be called "off-modern." The adverb "off" confuses our sense of direction. It makes us explore side shadows and back alleys, rather than the straight road of progress; it allows us to take a detour from the deterministic narratives of history. Off-modernism offers a critique of both the modern fascination with newness and the no-less-modern reinvention of tradition. (9)

Off-modernism encapsulates Narayan's skepticism about the modern age, even as Narayan fully and comically participates in its reinvention. He is hardly a modernist if we hold strictly to modernism's experimental forms, rejection of the old, and evacuation of god. But he participates in that movement and in that moment, even from the rustic coconut mats and charpoys of Malgudi. Global modernism, perhaps, has yet to account for the affective possibilities offered by writers like Narayan, who do not write novels in the ways we associate with Anand, Rao, Ahmed Ali, Premchand, or Tagore (among countless others), that foreground political commitments, or by writers like G. V. Desani, who do not tear away the conventions of novelistic form. Yet Narayan keeps storytelling at the center of cultural life and recognizes that the work of the writer—even if laughably without result, even if devoted to something more like unwriting than writing—contributes something essential to modern life.

7. What is the value of unwriting?

Narayan's fictional world unwrites a colonial legacy that connects the writer with the account books of empire on the one hand and with the makers of the literary canon on the other—that is, Narayan revalues language, placing it outside an ordering regime based on hierarchy and inside a community of consumers. His fictional world suggests modes of unwriting through the negation that irony promotes and through a ghostly correspondence. And it suggests the power of the lost text, the unwritten text, or the potential text by the would-be writer, who must remain a shadowy figure, off-center, angled away from canonical traditions and thus bound up in a kind of negativity, despite whatever pleasures attend his or her suspended stance.

Barbara Herrnstein Smith writes in *Contingencies of Value*, “For like all value, literary value is not the property of an object or of a subject but, rather, *the product of the dynamics of a system*” (15). Global modernism, the literary exchange that renegotiates historical and aesthetic relations as we have conventionally understood them, is always transactional modernism, which carries with it, as Harish Trivedi reminds us, the “whiff of pervasive economic implication” (1). Art in the age of empire is involved in a continuous process of negotiation and exchange, circulating around questions of value and commerce. What, for example, is the value of literary writing in the colonies, and of writing in English? How might one frame the value of writing at the extraordinary moment of regime change? Narayan's novels are immersed in these questions, as if working out, on every page, the cost of writing itself. In the world of Malgudi, the value of work, rooms, sweets, kitchen staples, and of everyday living is always at play. For Narayan, literary value exists in an economy of goods and services, of home prices and home repairs, of family inheritances, and of the necessity for work (even as writ-

ing, especially the pretensions of the writer, is consistently mocked). Malgudi's printers—Narayan devotes two novels to them—are not printing fine literature; what rolls off their presses are self-published golden thoughts of fatuous officials, wedding invitations by beleaguered fathers, colored fruit juice labels, business cards and stationery, annual reports, and bank ledgers. These are the texts on which the town depends for its daily functioning. Narayan thinks about the work and business of writing, from the mental effort it takes to give birth to an idea to the physical effort needed to crank out its result on an old treadle printing press. The labor of writing comes up repeatedly in his memoirs, even as he writes with studied effortlessness.

Narayan stages, in the dreaminess and soft vacancies of Malgudi, the capacities of unwriting. He has fashioned a way to write about India that requires both an exhibition of the vacuity of the old way (the letter *d*, Macaulay, Wordsworth, and so on) and a display of another way through a tale of failed authorship. One does not find experimental form in the novels of Malgudi, just layer upon layer of ironic commentary about the town, its inhabitants, its historical moment, and the activity or inactivity of writing. Emerging in his comic episodes and in his baffled characters is the recognition of the importance of keeping things unsettled, in suspension, or visible only in their negation. In *The English Teacher*, Krishna's future is inactive, because Krishna will be opting out, quitting his job, moving beyond any framework of economic or imperial exchange. If the English empire and the English language are productive—that is, tied up with the capitalist profit motives that governed colonial administration and education—Narayan emphasizes the unproductive in response. *The English Teacher* refuses us any sense of progress, forward-moving time, or productive activity. Rather, the inaction at the end of the novel contradicts the doing that is required in the frame-

work of economic exchange: it is a model of noncompliance that goes beyond passive resistance as we have historically understood it in early-twentieth-century India. The unwisdom of writing figures centrally across the Malgudi works as a reminder and an invocation of the enabling, if uncertain, powers of unwriting the world as we have known it.

NOTES

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1. Although Narayan is an immensely popular writer, his work has not instigated commentary equal to the breadth and duration of his artistic output. There are exceptions, of course, including John Thieme's excellent monograph.

2. See Vanessa Ogle's history of the effects of the time reform movement in the colonies.

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A “Leg Show Dance” in a Skyscraper: The Sequenced Mechanics of John Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer*

ALIX BEESTON

ON 16 SEPTEMBER 1896, THE *NEW YORK TIMES* REPORTED THAT the infamous “Parisian beauty and singer” Anna Held had arrived in New York City to appear in the farce *A Parlor Match*. According to the *Times*, her steamship ingress had been the source of much “rumor” and anticipation (“Mlle. Anna Held”). The gossipy chatter was encouraged by the theatrical entrepreneur Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., who spun the news that Held took a daily dip in a bath of milk. Ziegfeld coordinated the delivery of large quantities of fresh milk with the arrival of New York’s reporters to her suite, then invited the reporters in for a glimpse of this latter-day Cleopatra enacting her luxurious, creamy ablutions (Mizejewski 41).

In a brown-cover notebook used by John Dos Passos in the period 1919–27, a scribbled reference to Held’s off-Broadway debut is nested in a series of rough sketches of tumbling trapeze artists, ball-balancing seals, and top-hatted figures: “Anna Held in a Parlor Match at the Herald Sq. Theatre” (“Brown Cover Notebook”). His allusion to this moment in theater, media, and pinup girl history clarifies the crucial importance of his work, and particularly of his first major novel, *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), to an understanding of American modernism and the history of the novel more generally. The consignment of Dos Passos to the margins of modernist studies is curious, given his significant participation in the aesthetic of technologized innovation that remains a structuring principle in accounts of modernist *écriture*. In part, he is now more name-dropped than studied because of the sprawling scope and historical specificity of his most important work, the 1200-page *U.S.A.* trilogy, which is undoubtedly a time-consuming and pedagogically awkward addition to university syllabi and reading lists.¹ Yet it is *U.S.A.* that retains critical currency. The very prominence of the trilogy in the decade of its publication—

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Dos Passos was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine after the final installment, *The Big Money*, appeared in 1936—has entrenched it as an integral part of American cultural history and, in particular, of the social realist mode of the 1930s. This association has caused the specific formal innovation enacted in his earlier fiction to be overlooked.

For Janet Galligani Casey, the failure to perceive Dos Passos as central to American modernism relates to the alignment of the author and his writing with “a pejorative effeminacy.” If Casey is right about the “threat” posed by his “appropriation of the feminine as a site for radicalist challenges” in his work (4), these gendered imperatives might be seen to account for the scholarly shelving of his most accessible and popular novel, *Manhattan Transfer*, which in the last three decades has become an obscurity in an already obscure oeuvre. Analyzing *Manhattan Transfer* in accordance with the orientation of popular performance and display intimated by “Anna Held in a Parlor Match at the Herald Sq. Theatre” pulls the curtains, as it were, on the novel’s broad critique of the gendered specular economy of the modern metropolis. At the same time, reading across Andreas Huyssen’s “great divide” to establish new aesthetic, material, and sociocultural contexts for interpreting Dos Passos’s writing discloses a deep correlation between his fragmentary, additive narrative tactics and the mass entertainments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The discovery of Held in the archival cache behind *Manhattan Transfer* does not merely offer a means of recovery for his writing in discussions of 1920s modernist fiction. It also supplies new parameters for theorizing strategies of narration and characterization in that fiction vis-à-vis the technologies of popular entertainment and display in this period.

Dos Passos was recalling Held and envisaging circus and theater scenes around the same time as he was putting to paper the first sections of *Manhattan Transfer*. In the

same brown notebook, he jotted down some thoughts preliminary to the drafting of the novel, including a sentence that would eventually appear in it with only small modification: “We’ll call her Ellen after my mother said Mr. Thatcher with tears in his eyes on the arrival to the maternity hospital” (“Brown Cover Notebook” 21). The brown notebook also contains a list that reads like a *dramatis personae*. Under the heading “Burlesque Play,” Dos Passos lined up a series of stock characters, including “The Footlight Queen,” “The Bum,” and “The Fairy.” There is a comparable register of theatrical archetypes in another notebook he used during this period, which makes the connection to *Manhattan Transfer* explicit. In this second list, alongside references to “Chorus Girls” and an “Opening chorus—leg show dance,” “The blonde Queen” is identified as “Nevada Jones,” a character who performs vaudeville routines in Dos Passos’s 1925 novel (“Black Checkered Notebook”).

Dos Passos’s notebooks reveal the distinctive and notable theatrical contexts for the novel, landing us simultaneously in the Herald Square Theatre with Held in Ziegfeld’s *A Parlor Match* and on the elaborate, multilevel stage of the Ziegfeld Follies, the renowned Broadway revues Ziegfeld went on to produce in the 1910s and 1920s. The penciled reference in the checkered notebook to “leg show” choreography unavoidably conjures the Follies girl, the most famous of all chorus girls. As Linda Mizejewski points out, Held’s arrival in New York City was the pretext for the most successful publicity stunt of the era, and Held served, on her milk-bathed unveiling, as the “immediate precursor” to the haughty-stepped, feather-headressed Follies girl whom Ziegfeld sent down the ornate staircase a decade later (41). In alluding to Ziegfeld’s revue-style productions off and on Broadway, Dos Passos implies the measure of equivalence between Held and the Follies girl as well as between the stages on which they appeared.

Manhattan Transfer is located in the world of the segmented spectacle of situations and set pieces of burlesque and vaudeville performance, which from the 1860s onward became increasingly associated with the variety show format. These theatrical contexts have been almost entirely overlooked in the scholarship, which has understood *Manhattan Transfer*'s mosaic or kaleidoscopic narrative effects as analogous to the montage techniques of avant-garde cinema.² A novel in step with the Follies girls in the 1910s and 1920s and with Anna Held in the 1890s, *Manhattan Transfer* is conditioned and inflected by a signal retrospection of the spectatorial contexts and technologies of mass entertainment across this period. This retrospection complicates routine claims about the novel's consonance with the rupturing, decentering aesthetic of visual nihilism and abstraction normally associated with elite modern art and cinema. It also complicates claims made about fragmentary or composite modernist writing in general. *Manhattan Transfer* corroborates the vast entanglements of the forms and apparatuses of low, popular amusements and those of high modernist art in contributing to a newly corporealized modality of vision, in Jonathan Crary's formulation (4–5), from the nineteenth century on.

This essay conceptualizes the iterative mechanics of the composite novel in modernism, interpreting the episodic aesthetic of *Manhattan Transfer* in relation to the sequenced, syncopated series of theatrical scenes exemplified by Ziegfeld's revue-style productions and embodied in the rhythmic gestures of his famous chorus troupe. As a stage set for a "leg show dance," Dos Passos's New York City and the characters who inhabit it are rendered serially, as assemblages. The narrative centrality of the stage actress Ellen Thatcher in *Manhattan Transfer* is therefore explicated precisely in terms of her thespian career: she is the star of a modern metropolis that operates like a Follies stage, a chorine in a line of cho-

rines, a listed and aggregate figure, a woman in series. In the process, and somewhat unexpectedly, *Manhattan Transfer* emerges as an index for the body-machine complex in turn-of-the-century American culture. Dos Passos's modern city allegorizes what Mark Seltzer describes as the remaking, around 1900, of individuals as "statistical persons" tabulated and archived under the control technologies of statistics and surveillance (100).

Moving from the archive to the stage, from the stage to the novel, and from the novel to the city street, I use a range of critical methods and discourses, including gender studies, narrative analysis, and performance and industrial histories. The diversity of these methodological commitments demonstrates the productive mobility of *Manhattan Transfer*. This mixed approach also throws light on one of the most compelling narrative intrigues of the novel: the triumph, under the imperious conditions of the Taylorist industrial efficiency movement, of numbers over (female) bodies, of the inanimate over the animate, and of the public over the private. Ultimately, I seek to return Ellen and her purportedly effeminate creator, along with the Follies girl, to the center stage of 1920s modernism—indeed, to return the popular stage itself to modernism, opening up new lines of inquiry into its socialized and technologized mechanisms of writing.

Dos Passos had an avid interest in the theater. As early as 1920, he turned his hand to an experimental play script; in the same year as *Manhattan Transfer* was published, his play *The Garbage Man* premiered in Boston; and before the decade was through, he would be heavily involved in New York's revolutionary theater scene—not only writing plays but also painting sets and designing posters.³ Traditionally marginalized in both literary scholarship and theater history, Dos Passos's theatrical work has in recent years received a welcome new focus (see esp. Fahy; Trum-

peter). The relevance of his investment in the world of the theater to *Manhattan Transfer* is indicated quite straightforwardly by the fact that its central character is a successful Broadway actress. The iconography around Ellen Thatcher explicitly incorporates the theatrical spectacle of the Ziegfeld Follies. Amid Dos Passos's vast cityscape, one skyscraper becomes the obsession of Jimmy Herf, a failed newspaperman, in his nocturnal wanderings:

Faces of Follies girls, glorified by Ziegfeld, smile and beckon to him from the windows. Ellie in a gold dress, Ellie made of thin gold foil absolutely lifelike beckoning from every window. And he walks around blocks and blocks looking for the door of the humming tinselwindowed skyscraper, round blocks and blocks and still no door. (327)

Ziegfeld and his Follies appear in *U.S.A.* too: in *Nineteen-Nineteen*, Eveline Hutchins attends the 1914 Follies revue in Chicago; in *The Big Money*, Ziegfeld himself plucks Margo Dowling out of obscurity and puts her into the first row of the chorus. In *Manhattan Transfer*, the reference is doubly inscribed, through two phrases that form a loosely rhyming couplet: *Fac-es of Foll-ies girls / glor-i-fied by Zieg-feld*. The insistent diction is appropriate to a spectacle of replication in which Ellen proliferates into a series of beckoning bodies: she is not simply a Follies girl but an entire chorus of them laid out in a glittering grid. She abides by the same rule of seriality that organized the Follies revues, four-hour-long variety shows that interspersed full-scale pageant scenes with comedy routines and musical numbers. Insofar as the rhythmic, combinatory unfolding of their mixed programs resembled the repetitious routines of their star attraction, the Follies girl, the Ziegfeld Follies operated as a kind of chorus troupe writ large.

As the Ellens as Follies girls wave and smile at Jimmy below, their routine of small, standardized gestures recalls the *tableau vivant*, the Follies girls' most famous trick, and

its tensile invocation of the organic and the inorganic. Ziegfeld's chorus girls were reduced to automata in visual dramas of militaristic or machine aesthetics, corralled into geometric patterns and whirling tableaux modeled after rotating gearwheels.⁴ Achieving an impression of propulsive dynamism out of the controlled, successive workings of its component parts, the conjoined and recursive sequence of movements that composed the Follies girls' skits produced the effect of collapsing body on body, segment into whole.⁵ The Follies girl was thus poised, cool and gleaming, at the interface between the singular and the multiple, the personal and the impersonal, and the animate and the inanimate. Poised, indeed: the *tableau vivant* was essentially a balancing act between these oppositions, conflating female bodies with the extravagant mise-en-scène of Ziegfeld's revues. The visual thrill of these living pictures or living curtains was directly proportionate to their consummation of the paradoxical relation from which these grand tableaux derived their popular names. In *Manhattan Transfer*, the window-framed, beckoning bodies in the skyscraper function as a poetic variation on the *tableau vivant*'s embodied-disembodied equivocality. The slippage, performed in and by the female body at the window, between the "glorified" Follies girl and the glittering mirage of Ellen, is compounded in the ontological incertitude of that body, which is at once "made of thin gold foil" and "absolutely lifelike." This description seems bent on undoing itself: if to be lifelike is to confirm, through simulation, the gap between life and its likeness, then the adverb *absolutely* undermines the guarantee it makes.

Manhattan Transfer has been consistently understood as a novel patterned after the cinema rather than the theater. The early reviews, along with comments Dos Passos made in the late 1960s attesting to the influence on his novel of Eisensteinian montage, set the tone for scholarship that proposes formal continuities between the cinema and

the novel's fragmentary form.⁶ But as Michael Spindler and others have noted, Dos Passos's retrospective account of the development of his montage aesthetic was flawed: the author could not have seen Eisenstein's films before writing *Manhattan Transfer*, since they were not distributed in the United States until the late 1920s, and it is unlikely that he had read Eisenstein's film theory, which did not appear in American journals until 1927.⁷ Similarly, scholarly discussions of transmedia "crossfertilization," to use Claude-Edmonde Magny's term (22), in *Manhattan Transfer* often mobilize notions of cinematic techniques fairly haphazardly or imprecisely, sometimes to the point of ahistoricity.⁸

If divergent practices are lumped together when *Manhattan Transfer*'s montage effects are labeled cinematic, might there be more historically cogent ways to understand those effects? How does a scholarly preoccupation with cinematic qualities obscure the poetics—and politics—of Dos Passos's novel? The traces of New York's popular theater left in his notebooks and drafts offer at least a partial answer to these questions. The theater had by no means been supplanted by the cinema in the 1920s; to the contrary, this decade saw the peak of American theatrical production, with an average of 225 plays produced per year (Douglas 60). The fleeting, disjointed, striking amusements of the vaudeville stage along with those of the cinema were understood to rival and mirror the shocks and sensory intensities of modern urban life (Singer 90–92).

Moreover, the uneven development of the cinema in the early twentieth century in the United States was intimately caught up with the theater, with which it shared its exhibition context and, to some extent, its segmented arrangement. Ben Brewster has shown that even after the cinema moved from its first home, the vaudeville house, the format of the mixed show persisted to the end of the silent era and, in the big cities, much later. Programs at the nickelodeons, the small permanent the-

aters that were the crucial sites for the screening of short films across the United States after 1906, retained "the idea of the series of contrasting acts that dominated variety entertainment as a whole" (71).

Of the very few references to cinematic entertainments in *Manhattan Transfer*, the most significant is the nickelodeon, an exhibition site that was altogether old-fashioned by the time Dos Passos began drafting the novel in the early 1920s. The episode titled "Nickelodeon" begins with an epigraph that hangs on a nickel, the basic unit of currency in an economy of mass entertainment that runs on, or runs out of, technologies that are as ephemeral as the small coins they consume. "On Sixth Avenue on Fourteenth," we read, "there are still flyspecked stereopticons where for a nickel you can peep at yellowed yesterdays." In pairing the nickelodeon with the stereopticon, a slide projector dating from the 1850s, *Manhattan Transfer* presages the interrelation between optical toys and cinema that Crary has so influentially conceptualized in terms of a modernized vision that overthrows perspectival realism for a destabilized, subjective organization of representation. A variation on the stereoscope, a popular parlor device, the stereopticon forms compound images from the projections of two or more magic lanterns; its illusion is an assault on photographic referentiality and the unifications of monocular Cartesian perspectivalism. Like Crary's account of sensory immediacy through the modernization of vision, Dos Passos's rendering of the stained stereopticon in the larger performative context of the modern city street—and through the disjunctive lexicon of the modernist found poem—accommodates the low-popular and the high-modern observer alike. A curbside travelogue unfolding as a series of fragmentary phrases, the epigraph's passage down Sixth Avenue presents the entertainments of New York's streets as serial and fleeting. Recording the "bruised notes" of foxtrots, waltzes, and blues numbers

“limping” and “trailing” drunkenly out of New York dance halls, the epigraph makes the sonic residue of the dance halls’ “gyrating tinsel memories” the (shinier) supplement to the stereopticon’s “yellowed yesterdays.” Not only is the stereopticon the “waste-basket of torn-up daydreams” with which the epigraph ends, but the city street is also a dumping ground for past, or at best passing, attractions (264).

Traveling by associative collocation, the “Nickelodeon” epigraph’s principle of juxtaposition is consistent with both the structural logic of Dos Passos’s multilinear novel and the spatial design of the city in the novel. First, the epigraph’s listed format repeats in miniature the accumulation of fragmentary and episodic prose blocks that make up *Manhattan Transfer*. Second, and concomitantly, the journey of the epigraph down Sixth Avenue replicates the defining movements of pedestrians and vehicles in the striated space of Dos Passos’s New York. In this street-tracked metropolis, on which wheels turn in unison and feet step in line, ranks of cars slither along roadways “in two smooth continuous streams,” and people are “fed” into buildings “in two endless tapes through the revolving doors out into Broadway, in off Broadway” (153, 115). Jimmy Herf is agitated not merely by the perpetually revolving doors but also by the daily passage of “elbowing, shoving, shuffling” bodies ceaselessly traveling into and in off Broadway (115).

That the fragmentary narrative design of *Manhattan Transfer* is closely connected to, and constituent of, the contours of the modern metropolis it represents and configures is signaled by the fact that the novel originates with the kind of successive, linear movement that so disturbs Jimmy on Broadway. The “grinding out” of his life “like sausage meat” by the revolving doors is a version of the metaphoric transmutation of human bodies into foodstuffs that occurs in the opening vignette of the novel (115). *Manhattan Transfer* begins with an image of a crowd channeled and pro-

pelled in sequence, “press[ed] through the manure-smelling wooden tunnel of the ferry-house, crushed and jostling like apples fed down a chute into a press” (15).

Scholars interested in decoding the structural logic of *Manhattan Transfer* have rarely extrapolated a spatial metaphor for the text from this initial, pressing movement, instead paying attention to the vortex, a different but related image pattern offered up by the novel through its depiction of a New York that drives its inhabitants “round and round in a squirrel cage” (202). It is not a coincidence that the dizzying momentum of the vortex obliquely mirrors the spinning film reel. Yet if we revisit Jimmy’s dream of Ellen Thatcher amalgamated with the Follies girls—a move encouraged by the theatrical frame that shapes Dos Passos’s notebooks—we encounter an emphatic demarcation of the city streetscape as a site for the sequenced movement with which the novel opens. Ellen’s sheer, shimmering multiplicity, mimed in her eternal beckoning and smiling on the latticed, glassy facade of the skyscraper, produces and corresponds to the relentless futility of Jimmy’s retraced steps on the street below. What this scene emphasizes is less the actual circularity of his path than its repetitious circuitry. His steps “around blocks and blocks,” “round blocks and blocks,” are less round and round than they are over and over again—a point substantiated by the stammering repetition inscribed at the level of utterance in this passage. At the foot of the skyscraper, Jimmy succumbs to the kind of torturously reiterative momentum that is proper to and standard in Dos Passos’s tape-fed, apple-pressed metropolis.

In an essay that complicates the notion of *Manhattan Transfer*’s cinematic qualities, E. D. Lowry suggests that Dos Passos’s method of narrative montage might register an adjustment to a public schooled by the news media and vaudeville theater “to ‘consume’ an endless stream of events and sensations” (1629–30). Lowry’s “endless stream” is akin to

Brewster's "idea of the series" in theater and cinema in the early twentieth century. The lists of theater archetypes in the notebooks that lie behind the drafts of *Manhattan Transfer* affirm Lowry's intuition about the value of seeing Dos Passos's novel as a model of the stream of scenic spectacles represented in this period by Ziegfeld's theatrical productions, among other sensational entertainments. Structured by the juxtaposition of extended, languorous spectacles with dynamic, energized variety numbers, the Follies revues contributed to the redefinition of spectatorial entertainment in modernism as, in Leo Charney's formulation, "a structure of peaks and valleys . . . composed from a chain of discrete moments traded off against slack moments" (13).⁹

In fact, the streaming, streamlined movements in Dos Passos's metropolis refer openly to vernacular theater forms and traditions. One epigraph begins, "Such afternoons the buses are crowded into line like elephants in a circusparade"; in another, titled "Went to the Animal's Fair," ranks of cars "flow in a long ribbon . . . towards the glow over the city that stands up incredibly into the night sky . . . like the yellow tall bulk of a tentshow" (186, 199). Its streets lined with circus animals and the "torn-up daydreams" of popular entertainments, Dos Passos's Manhattan is a yellow-glowing "great lit tent" (264, 199)—and so is *Manhattan Transfer* as a whole. The novel's dreaming of the Follies reflects a larger collision among the reiterative, serial actions of the variety show, the modern urban space, and the modern novel. Jimmy's march "around blocks and blocks" not only conveys the nonteleological tedium of his path but also shows the degree to which, in the block-by-block topography of its streets as in the "tinselwindowed" architecture of its high-rises, Dos Passos's New York—and the narrative that encodes it—is gridded with girls.

In the notebook in which Dos Passos remembered Anna Held, there is an unembel-

lished catalog of Ellen Thatcher's sequenced evolution through *Manhattan Transfer*:

Ellen Thatcher
becomes
Elaine Ogelthorpe
Helena Thatcher
Helena Thatcher Herf¹⁰

Beneath this list, he gestured toward an idea that would grow into the main drama of the novel's opening episodes as well as into the symbolic intrigue that sets the structural and aesthetic terms for the text as a whole: "The birth of Ellen T in the maternity hospital—they mixed the babies up?" ("Brown Cover Notebook"). The splintering into multiplicity tabulated in the gridded urban edifice of Jimmy's dream, and inscribed more matter-of-factly in the list of Ellen's successive iterations, is augmented and vivified in the novel by the question, infinitely deferred, of her ancestry. At its opening, *Manhattan Transfer* worries over the hysterical cries of Ellen's mother, Susie, at the sight of the unlabeled baby girl who is brought to her: "It's not mine. Take it away. . . . That woman's stolen my baby" (18). The question of which baby is Susie's is an extension of other visual and ontological difficulties in this scene. A nurse carries a newborn child in a basket into a room lined with other baskets; when she sets the basket down, the baby "squirm[s] feebly like a knot of earthworms" (15). Even as the child is put in a basket-line series, the move from the singular to the plural effected by this simile posits her as a series. In its writhing movements, the knotty form embodies a number of vexed polarities similar to those that structured the Follies girls' performances: Is she an individual or a mass? a child or an animal? In the "opening chorus" of *Manhattan Transfer*, to borrow a phrase from Dos Passos's notebooks, the novel's main character takes her place as one of a chorus of girls ("Black Checkered Notebook").

The presentation of Ellen as the Follies chorus troupe in the skyscraper does more

than enmesh her in the same culture of gaudy spectacle as the Follies girls; it also relates her narrative function in *Manhattan Transfer* to the dazzling seriality and instability she shares, from birth, with those girls. Her centrality in the novel is parallel to her success on Broadway: she is the Follies girl par excellence, the archetypal figure in a battalion of girls whose celebrity counterintuitively rests on their anonymity. A model of stardom that requires rather than resists facelessness is consonant with the visual paradoxes of Dos Passos's metropolis, epitomized in the novel's opening scene of a hospital where difference is sameness for babies and mothers alike. The antimonies corporealized in Ellen are caught up with the recursive spatial design and activities of the city hospital ward, where rows of basket-kept babies replicate rows of bedridden new mothers. When Ed Thatcher nervously arrives at the maternity ward to visit his wife and newborn daughter, he finds "[r]ows of beds . . . faces fat, lean, yellow, white; that's her" (17). The drama of recognition in which he arrives at his wife's white face through a spectrum of strangers' faces is also one of misrecognition that regards mother like daughter—that is, as potentially indistinguishable from other women. So, when Ed sees the row of babies and asks, "How do you tell them apart nurse?," the nurse's blithe reply summarizes the intrigue of endless substitutability that determines the activity of the hospital ward and of the novel as a whole: "Sometimes we cant" (18). Susie is distressed not only because the child she has been given may not be hers but also because it does not really matter one way or the other.

Manhattan Transfer's opening scenes confirm the notion of Ellen's listed characterization in relation to the striated, repetitive space of New York City. Through the strategies of juxtaposition and addition that organize both the novel and Ziegfeld's productions—each of which engage in practices of listing, of laying down in order—the opening vignette of the

pressed, disembarking bodies is itself pressed into the scene of Ellen's birth. The stench of the "manuresmelling" ferry-house tunnel carries into the hospital, where the nurse carries the basket "at arm's length as if it were a bedpan"; the baby's body, like the channeled passageway through which bodies are fed into the modern metropolis, is soiled. The novel therefore initiates a charged relay between the modern urban space—the row-lined hospital, the chute-like ferry tunnel—and the body of this child, who is (and is not) Ellen. The hospital and the tunnel are presented as assemblages, as profoundly iterative.

The spatial metaphor of the sequence, in line with the revue structure of the Follies, prescribes an aesthetic and organizational framework for reading *Manhattan Transfer* and, at the same time, unveils Ellen as the nexus of a series of recastings and refigurations about which the narrative and the narrated city pivot. In this respect, as Dos Passos's characters amass in the crowded arena of the city street, they image the "masses," the overriding "political idea" and "aesthetic fantasy" associated with urban life, as Stefan Jonsson explains, from around the time of Held's New York debut (7).¹¹ A changeling child in a mixed-up maternity ward who grows up to be an inconstant wife in a churning metropolis, Ellen is reformed and reiterated in the novel by her constant suturing to other individuals through relations of interchangeability and transposition. Kathleen L. Komar's account of repetition as the primary structural principle of *Manhattan Transfer* effectively modifies the idea of the vortex toward a kinetic dynamism that is more relentlessly recurrent or sequential. For Komar, each of Dos Passos's characters "constantly retraces his own steps or those of another character" (17–18). When this observation is refracted through the Follies-filled skyscraper and the circuitous footpath it imprints onto the street below, there appears a striking resemblance between the retraced steps of Dos Passos's characters and the

precision dancing perfected on Broadway by the Follies girls. In its constant returning to Ellen above and beyond all other characters, *Manhattan Transfer* creates a dynamic of vacillation and exchange whereby the characters' steps follow hers, by complement or contrast.

A number of scholars have identified a problem around the subjective status of the characters in both *Manhattan Transfer* and *U.S.A.*¹² They seem, Joseph Warren Beach writes, to be "not quite *persons*" but "individuals made up of separate and unrelated moments" (57, 63–64). For Cecelia Tichi, *Manhattan Transfer* features a "representative sampling" of standardized and interchangeable figures (198).¹³ These descriptions can be refined with recourse to Siegfried Kracauer's concept of the chorus line's transmogrification of "individual girls" into the fractional components of "indissoluble girl clusters" in "The Mass Ornament," a 1927 essay, now famous, that is an especially nuanced example of the discourse of the masses in this period (76). "The human figure enlisted in the mass ornament," claims Kracauer, "has begun the exodus from lush organic splendor and the constitution of individuality toward the realm of anonymity" (83). For Kracauer, as Jonsson points out, the mass ornament subordinates the human subject "under the reign of an abstract organization hidden from those who toil within it" (156). *Manhattan Transfer* dramatizes these organizational effects and subjects its readers to them. Harnessing the blank interstices that separate and bridge the episodes of the multilinear novel, Dos Passos habitually empties out and refills his characters through a technique of informational delay. By identifying characters only by subjective personal pronouns at the beginning of each new prose section, he recuperates their anonymity.¹⁴ Anna Cohen, the daughter of working-class Jewish immigrants, first appears in the novel as an unnamed woman caught in the arms of an unnamed man at the stoop of a tenement house. It is not until the

woman has extricated herself from the man's embrace, run up four flights of stairs, and tip-toed into her room that she is called—rather, that she calls herself—by name: "Anna you've got to forget it or you wont sleep" (250).

As the characters enter and reenter the narrative as abstractions, half-remembered acquaintances passed on busy city streets, Dos Passos compounds the crises of identification in the novel's opening scenes. The novel works to compose, or make composite, the character of Ellen Thatcher through accumulation and augmentation. Anna's first appearance, near the beginning of the third part of the novel, is immediately followed by the scene in which Ellen and Jimmy return to New York City, after an absence of several years, with a baby in tow. "The baby with tiny shut purplishpink face and fists lay asleep on the berth," the episode begins. "Ellen was leaning over a black leather suitcase. Jimmy Herf in his shirtsleeves was looking out of the porthole" (251). That the baby is unnamed is poignant, given that in the final scene of the novel's second section an unidentified woman visits a doctor for an abortion. When we join Ellen and Jimmy on the ferry, we do not yet know for certain that the woman in the doctor's clinic is Ellen; nor do we find out that Ellen and Jimmy are married until later in the ferry scene. Was the aborted baby the child of Ellen's now-deceased lover, Stan, and, if not, is the baby on the ferry his or Jimmy's? The identity of the child on his or her first appearance is a mystery, as is Ellen's last appearance in the novel before this scene. The woman at the tenement house who turns out to be Anna is connected, at intervals, with the woman at the doctor's clinic who turns out to be Ellen and with the baby on the ferry who turns out to be Jimmy's. This triangulation of unidentified-identified bodies is further complicated by the fact that the baby with the "tiny shut purplishpink face" unequivocally recalls the baby with the "minute purple face" at the beginning of *Manhattan Transfer* (18, 251). The child emerges as a repetition of Ellen herself.

This repetition unlocks an irony that configures both the thematic and structural registers of *Manhattan Transfer*. Ellen is designated, according to her status as a woman in series conjoined with or substituted by the novel's other characters, as the matrix for the episodic, sequenced novel that begins with her beginnings. "You're so different, that's what it is about you," the theater agent Harry Goldweiser says to her. "All these girls round New York here are just the same, they're monotonous" (186). But Goldweiser's starry-eyed admiration for Ellen unravels in the scheme of *Manhattan Transfer*, since his belief in her unique allure slips neatly into a series of amorous declarations that stretches from John Oglethorpe to Jimmy Herf to George Baldwin. These men think Ellen is different from the rest of New York's women, but, as a star in the mode of the chorine, she distinguishes herself only to the degree that she does not distinguish herself.

When Baldwin, later in the novel, confides to Ellen that his life was "empty" and "hollow" before he met her, her nonplussed response discloses the almost comical routineness of these encounters (336). The tedium of the romances undermines their testimony; it questions the idea of Ellen as a personality, since Baldwin's passion is already rehearsed—not only by Goldweiser but also by himself. Immediately before their dinner-table conversation, Baldwin and Ellen run into Gus and Nellie McNiel, a woman with whom Baldwin had an affair years earlier. "Think of it I was crazy in love with her and now I can't remember what her first name was," he says to Ellen; "Funny isn't it?" (201). What is "funny" is the friction between this supposedly "crazy" attachment and his amnesia, the relegation of Nellie to no more than the wife of Gus McNiel—her unnam-ing—making patently clear the fickleness of Baldwin's desires. What is also funny is that Baldwin cannot recall a name so similar to that of the woman who is her replacement

and who is sitting directly across from him in the restaurant. The palindromic back-and-forth between Nellie and Ellen demonstrates the slightness of the shift through which Ellen succeeds Nellie in his affections.¹⁵

Ellen is situated in a series of wives that maps Baldwin's upward social mobility, even as she is remade as a series of wives through her own capriciousness and adultery—both of which plot the fragmentary progress of *Manhattan Transfer*. This irony is what makes so compelling the image, later in the novel, of a lonely Baldwin leafing through a cigar-store phone book looking for Ellen under *H*: neither the *H* in Herf or Helena quite belongs to her. The textual traces of Ellen in the phone book are a tabulated chronicle of her fabricated and refabricated identity and its intrinsic, even congenital, connection to her city. Recapitulating the splintering of her name into a listed amalgam through which Dos Passos roughly charted the form of *Manhattan Transfer* in the drafts, the phone book is another indexical record of the charged interaction and affinity among the unstable, serial Ellen; the reiterated, striated modern city; and the sequenced novel that narrates them both.

We cannot say that Dos Passos remembered Anna Held's New York appearance, since the year when Held first trod the boards of the Herald Square Theatre was also the year of his birth. Spiraling out from this instance of impossible retrospection, *Manhattan Transfer* is attentive to a broad range of variously by-gone technologies and traditions of mass entertainment, which are emblemized by the nickelodeons and stereopticons on its city streets.¹⁶ Dos Passos's invocation of the decade of his birth in his notebook sits with his ambivalence toward the modern machine. It is ironic, given the persistent coding of Dos Passos as feminine in masculine high modernist praxis and culture, that he himself reflected a pejorative gendering of mass culture in his stated preference for "straight" writing—

straight being a loaded term by any standard. His esteem for writing that works, as he said in 1932, "with speech straight and so dominat[es] the machine of production" over writing that "merely feed[s] the machine, like a girl in a sausage factory shoving hunks of meat into the hopper" clearly encodes anxieties around commodification and mass culture (Introduction). Notwithstanding his "paranoid" resistance to the "seductive lure" of mass culture, to borrow Huyssen's terms (53, 55), Dos Passos is at other points far less rigorous in differentiating between sausage-pressing girls and the straight-and-narrow praxis of modern (masculine) writing. In a 1935 essay, for instance, he considers the professional writer to be "a technician just as much as an electrical engineer is" ("Writer" 169).

Dos Passos's mixed attitudes toward modern machine culture serve to complicate conventional ascriptions of a machinic energy and structural force to his writing. Lisa Nanne offers the more or less representative view that *Manhattan Transfer* is "a product of the machine age," meaning that the segmented pieces of its narration and the different parts of his cityscape, from characters to buildings and so on, operate like "cogs" in "an active machine" (156–57). What remains unclear in these accounts is the function of this textual machine. In keeping with the productive resonance between the Follies revues and *Manhattan Transfer*, Dos Passos's engagement with machine culture in this novel can be understood as roughly compatible with the culture of the chorus line. By the 1920s, it was already commonplace to acknowledge how the precision dancing of chorus troupes modeled Henry Ford's semiautomatic production line. Kracauer's joke in "The Mass Ornament" about the chorines as the "products of American distraction factories" evokes the Follies girls' cold, impassive performances, which cultural critics associated with overmechanization virtually since the Follies girls' first staircase descent (75). In a

1931 essay, Kracauer charges that the "mathematical precision" of the chorines' raised legs "joyfully affirm the progress of rationalization" ("Girls" 565). Yet Felicia McCarren convincingly argues that forms of modern dance that internalize "the machine into the body" through streamlined gestures and group synchronicity often "imply a critique of technology" even as they encode the logic of Taylorist scientific management on the "ostentatiously non-productive" site of the stage (130, 144).

Likewise, Dos Passos's "leg show dance" in a skyscraper brings machine aesthetics onto the narrative stage in order to ironize and destabilize it.¹⁷ *Manhattan Transfer* configures the remapping of the "vague and shifting" boundary lines between "the inert and the animate" that Thorstein Veblen traced in the machine culture of turn-of-the-century America (7, 8). The reiterative construction of Ellen Thatcher across the novel represents and enacts the processes by which, in Mark Seltzer's account of the body-machine complex in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, individuals are converted into numbers, cases, and visual displays through the collusion of "the visible and the calculable" in the mechanisms of surveillance and statistics (100). For Seltzer, who is drawing on Foucault, the primary achievement of Taylorist scientific management is the devising of "a system of supervision by representation" that replicates physical work processes on paper, collapsing the distinction between "production and processing," the body and the machine (159). Taylorism provides an idiom of rationalization that posits the subjects of work processes as listed formulations—formulations very much like those with which the writing of *Manhattan Transfer* began and like those that delineate Ellen as a contested site for repetitive processes of naming and renaming.

Spanning the 1890s through the 1920s, *Manhattan Transfer* represents the modern city as an archived, tabulated space, just as phone-booked as its main character. Count-

ing blocks in a taxi on her way to meet Baldwin at the Algonquin Restaurant late in the novel, Ellen thinks, “It must have been to keep from going crazy people invented numbers. . . . Probably that’s what old Peter Stuyvesant thought, or whoever laid the city out in numbers.” It is of utmost significance that her foundational myth of the city is preconditioned by her own “jangled nerves” at the prospect of becoming yet another version of herself through marriage to Baldwin. The “cold and emotionless” numbers that rationalize the New York cityscape—like the industrial factory under the supervisory mechanisms of Taylorist management—are equated with, even made equivalent to, her itemizing and fracturing through the machinations of divorce and remarriage that form her into *Manhattan Transfer*’s preeminent other woman (334). Her taxi-borne progress through the city becomes a parable for her conversion into one of Seltzer’s “statistical persons.” The scene visually tropes the modern industrial factory as it navigates, block by block, the terrible distance Ellen has traveled from an unlabeled child to an insistently and repeatedly labeled woman: Thatcher, Oglethorpe, Herf, Baldwin.

Apprehending Ellen as a Taylorized body, a functionary of a body-machine complex that emerged at the time of her birth, illuminates how *Manhattan Transfer* stages the replacement of physical mechanisms with representational ones: the subordination of bodies to numbers, of the animate to the inert. This replacement anticipates Guy Debord’s society of the spectacle, arising after “all that was once directly lived has become mere representation” and “[asserting] that all human life, which is to say all social life, is mere appearance” (12).¹⁸ In Dos Passos’s novel, the triumph of the Taylorist machine is also the triumph of the windowpanes of skyscrapers and taxicabs—and of their image twin, the mirror. In the same period in which Held first appeared under lights in New York, city department

stores made use of new forms of advertising, including the mannequin, one of the props for the “thrilled iconography of standardized persons and things” and correlative to “the invention of a culture of numbers, models, and statistics” (Seltzer 4, 5). At various times in Ziegfeld’s revues throughout the 1910s and the 1920s, the Follies girls were presented as (reembodied) mannequins in their modeling of high-end fashions. When Ellen alights from the taxi and joins Baldwin at the Algonquin, she apprehends the “smart probing glances” of those around her like “the sense of a mirror” (330). In the ladies’ room of the restaurant,

Ellen stayed a long time looking in the mirror. . . . She kept winding up a hypothetical doll-self and setting it in various positions. Tiny gestures ensued, acted out on various model stages. Suddenly she turned away from the mirror with a shrug of her toowhite shoulders and hurried to the diningroom. (334)

Like the skyscraper windows that encase the ever-waving Ellens, the bathroom mirror before which Ellen performs her pageant of “[t]iny gestures” replicates the supervisory apparatus shared by the Follies stage, the industrial factory, and the modern city, according to which the body is oppressed and dominated in space. Just like a Follies girl, just like a factory worker, she becomes a machine as she is gazed at.

This encapsulated drama, this scenography of the “negation of life that has invented a visual form for itself,” in Debord’s terms (14), demonstrates what Casey has elegantly described as the Foucauldian psychosocial dynamic of Dos Passos’s novel, “whereby women are contained through their very visibility, metaphorically ‘disciplined’ by male ‘surveillance’” (116).¹⁹ To understand the world of *Manhattan Transfer* as a Follies stage is to emphasize the gendered politics of spectacle played out on its streets and to expose the damaging effects of containment inscribed at the level of narrative structure. “Look at the

swell dame," remarks Joe O'Keefe as he sits in Madison Square Garden. "That's the way I like 'em, all slick an frilly with their lips made up" (191). Immediately before this, he notices two other girls: "He snatched blue of their eyes, a glint of lips and teeth as he passed" (190). These encounters reveal Dos Passos's city street as a site for the procession of piecemeal women apprehended in flashes: eyes, lips, teeth, gait, and attire. Turned into a listed series of component parts, women's bodies in his novel enact the injuries of surveillance and control in the modern metropolis. Incorporated, simultaneously, in a listed series of female bodies through the episodic reiterations of the multilinear text, these bodies also register as traumatic the formal fragmentation of the text. *Manhattan Transfer* is an extended meditation of the violence of containment through representation, brokered by the segmenting and framing of the narrative into parts within parts. The piecemeal bodies, like the piecemeal text, evince the disassembling excruciations of the listed sequence.

When Ellen returns to Baldwin's dinner table at the Algonquin, the small movements of the "dollself" subside into complete stasis. She feels "a gradual icy coldness stealing through her like novocaine":

It seemed as if she had set a photograph of herself in her own place, forever frozen into a single gesture. . . . Ellen felt herself sitting with her ankles crossed, rigid as a porcelain figure under her clothes, everything about her seemed to be growing hard and enameled, the air bluestreaked with cigarettesmoke, was turning to glass. (335)

She is now a sight rather than a subject, not merely the doll of her ladies' room vision but the sheer, slick vision itself, framed in and as glass. As she crosses the threshold between the body and the machine, her paralysis jams the diction of the passage into a stultified series of fragments separated by commas from "Ellen felt herself sitting" to "was turning

to glass." Through yet another listed form of expression, the conversion of her body is brought to book; her surrender to this glassy containment is of the same order as, and permits, the comfort she finds in the "cold and emotionless" numbers of the city.

For Michel de Certeau, walking in the metropolis subverts, disrupts, and evades the panoptic geometry of the "planned and readable city" (93).²⁰ De Certeau describes a "chorus of idle footsteps" that "are myriad, but do not compose a series. . . . Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities" (97). But this kind of walking in the city, which thrives in "lapses of visibility" (94), is categorically not the chorus in which Ellen belongs. In becoming a photograph, she becomes immured in the "graphical trails" de Certeau condemns as the reductive transcription of kinetic motion "into points that draw a totalizing and reversible line" on route surveys or maps (97, 99)—one of the minor instrumentalities that manage Foucault's disciplinary society (221). Not unseen but seen, not organic but mechanical, not mobile but immobile, Ellen the photograph is fixed in and as her transcription, an extension and radicalization of the image of Ellen as the Follies girls whose ceaseless beckoning synchs with the circuitous route of Jimmy's city walking. Docked and reduced to a point on a "totalizing and reversible line," she becomes a unit of computation, the abstract afterimage of her own monitored rationalization. Most fully visible when *Manhattan Transfer* is understood in the context of the popular theater, Dos Passos's critique of the psycho-social domination of the gaze in the gendered specular environment of the machine city is embodied—more accurately, embalmed—in the figure of Ellen as she grinds to a halt on the sequenced space of the metropolis.

But Ellen, embalmed in her repetitions, outlasts *Manhattan Transfer*. The characterological relay that conjoins her with Anna and Nellie extends to her near namesakes

in U.S.A.: Eleanor Stoddard and Eveline Hutchins. These women, whose friendship is a structural axis of the trilogy, are Ellen's rough contemporaries, setting up shop in New York in the same historical moment as her star begins to rise, and heading off to Paris, just like her, as Red Cross nurses at the outbreak of war in 1914. Eleanor, like Ellen, is "cool and white and collected," a social climber and a master of self-reinvention (584); Eveline shares Ellen's barely concealed anxiety and listless disappointment with New York's endless stream of social gatherings and romances. Reconfigured as Margo Dowling, the Ziegfeld girl of U.S.A. who appears at the end of the trilogy as "a porcelain doll" enveloped in a "dizzy swirl of cigarettesmoke" (1157), the glass-hardened, smoke-covered Ellen Thatcher is one of the "ghosts of platinum girls" haunting U.S.A. at its denouement (1163). From the skyscrapers of *Manhattan Transfer* to the United States of the trilogy, Dos Passos's "leg show dance" goes on tour, its reiterative steps tracked through the fragmented terrain of the modernist novel. In shifting attention away from Dos Passos's fame, now diminished, as a novelist in the social realist mode of the 1930s, *Manhattan Transfer* emerges as central to the development of high modernism in the previous decade.

NOTES

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1. Explanations of Dos Passos's marginalization tend to emphasize its political dimension. From the beginning, Dos Passos was disavowed by modernist writers for being too radical and by the proletarian camp for being too experimental. The slipperiness of his ideological attachments across his lifetime served to alienate the Marxist comrades of his youth as well as the conservative fold into which he gradually became ensconced. See Denning 163–99; Casey 1–17; and Harding 103–09.

2. The notable exception to the rule is Casey's exploration of the "visual grammar of audience-stage relations" that organizes Dos Passos's metropolis (115), on which my essay builds.

3. But note that Dos Passos's attitude toward the theater was quite ambivalent during this period, as evidenced by his 1925 essay "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?"

4. Contemporary accounts noted the marked uniformity of Ziegfeld's chorines in comparison with the English Gaiety Girls or the performers at the French Folies Bergère. Edmund Wilson, for one, described the Follies girls' "peculiar frigidity and purity" (51).

5. I draw here on Dinerstein's formulation of chorus troupes as "female-powered dynamos" (191–97).

6. The novel's first readers discerned "the technique of the movie" in *Manhattan Transfer*'s "flashes," "cut-backs," and "speed" (Lewis 69). Dos Passos stated in 1968, "At the time I did [*Manhattan Transfer*] I'm not sure whether I had seen Eisenstein's films. The idea of montage had an influence on the development of this sort of writing. I may have seen *Potemkin*" (Spindler 402).

7. There are examples of avant-garde montage films that were made in the United States in this period, most significantly Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler's *Manhatta* (1921). Foster finds continuities between *Manhatta* and *Manhattan Transfer* and points to the possibility that Dos Passos saw this film (189). Yet Suárez has cautioned against overstating the similarities between European films of that time and *Manhatta*; the former are augmented by an "aggressive despair" that is absent from the latter's "Whitmanian celebration [of the] modern material world" (96).

8. Arguments that make recourse to D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), the montage film Dos Passos most likely did see before writing *Manhattan Transfer*, fail to observe the clear discrepancy between Griffith's purposes and those of his Soviet peers. Critical narratives about the montage technique of Dos Passos make more historical sense when applied to his writing after his personal encounters with Russian filmmakers during a 1928 trip to the Soviet Union. As Seed suggests, Dos Passos's meeting with Eisenstein intensified his pursuit of "cinematic" goals (137–45). An especially insightful account of how the U.S.A. trilogy, begun in 1929, invites comparisons with Soviet techniques is Shloss (149–75).

9. Charney sees cinema emerging from this new structure of spectacle, and his "peaks and valleys" are consonant with the stop-start rhythm that both Gunning and Jenkins associate with slapstick comedy.

10. There is an almost identical list inscribed on the inside cover of the notebook in which Dos Passos drafted the first episodes of *Manhattan Transfer* circa 1924 ("Ellen Thatcher").

11. The idea of the masses is also thematized through Dos Passos's characteristic narrative idiom of merged words—for example, "manuresmelling." In terms that are highly relevant to my observations, Denning describes

the use of compound words in *U.S.A.* as a "Tayloring of the novel . . . a streamlined and efficient elimination of unnecessary parts" (177).

12. The characters in the narrative sections of *U.S.A.* have regularly been considered lifeless in comparison with the figures in the historical biographical sections of the trilogy. One consequence of the dismissal of Dos Passos's narratives is a scholarly myopia toward his female characters: although half the narratives concern women, only one of the twenty-seven biographies has a woman as its subject.

13. There is a limit to the extent to which the characters form a representative sample. The studied whiteness of the Follies girls, which both Dinerstein and Mizejewski explore, supports what Rowe identifies as the exclusion of persons of color in *Manhattan Transfer* (69–70). Rogers provides a more positive view of Dos Passos's social realist project in relation to immigrant identities.

14. Seed notes that we often "register a continuity of action but a change of character," making it "sometimes slightly unclear who is doing what in the novel" and so allowing Dos Passos to dramatize "overlaps in his characters' fortunes" (134).

15. Baldwin knows Ellen as Elaine, but the aural echo nevertheless rings out for the reader, since Ellen is the name used consistently by the narrator.

16. This connection with the past provides a context for the resonances between *Manhattan Transfer* and its most important precursor, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). Always reiterative, Ellen is inserted in an intertextual relay of thespian social climbers in the modern city.

17. "Craftsmanship," Dos Passos wrote in 1929, "is one of the few human functions a man can unstintingly admire. The drift of the Fordized world seems all against it" ("*Farewell*" 16).

18. A number of scholars have applied Debord's theory of the spectacle to *Manhattan Transfer* (see Mickalites; Geyh).

19. Petrovic likewise reads Dos Passos's metropolis in relation to Foucault's panoptic city. Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," deployed by Casey in her discussion of Ellen's "to-be-looked-at-ness," acknowledges Ziegfeld's contribution to entrenching the woman "displayed as sexual object" as the leitmotif of erotic spectacle (Mulvey 19).

20. On the relevance of de Certeau's theory of walking to *Manhattan Transfer*, see Keller's thoughtful treatment of Ellen's nonsubversive tactics (306–07).

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More Than Talking Animals: Charles Alexander Eastman's Animal Peoples and Their Kinship Critiques of United States Colonialism

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IN THE LAST TALE OF *RED HUNTERS AND THE ANIMAL PEOPLE* (1904)—the earliest published collection of tales from Dakota oral tradition, by Charles Alexander Eastman, an Isanti (Santee Dakota or “Sioux”)¹ author and physician—a trio of young men go to visit their brother-in-law, Sheyaka, who is “a renowned hunter [among] the Sioux.” As Sheyaka regales them with stories of talking animals, his audience begins to voice doubt about the veracity of his account, and their dialogue reads like a Platonic interrogation of animal language, intelligence, presence, and, finally, collective presence or peoplehood. Near the start of their conversation, though, one of the three young men, Kangee, insists, on the basis of his observations of a mother doe and her fawn, that “there is good ground for saying that the wild animals have a language to which we have not the key.” But Katola, “the doubter,” counters: “[Kangee] has made the doe and fawn real people. They can neither speak nor reason . . . and the fawn hides [from hunters] because it is its nature to hide, not because the mother has instructed it.”

Katola's doubt, in its ascribing to “nature” essential differences between human beings and animals, forms an analogue to categories of race by which Euro-Americans historically viewed indigenous peoples as savage, less than human. Through Katola's doubt, Eastman ironically maps a genealogy of racial difference onto the animals whom (or which) human beings, enfranchised by their ability to ponder the ontological status of nonhuman others, sit around and leisurely discuss. But instead of carrying the analogy of Dakota human being to Euro-American colonizer to its full extent, Eastman's story ultimately refuses any absolute ontological distinction between human beings and animals, instead asserting across boundaries of difference the ways in which human beings are like animals

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in behaviors they have learned from them. Roving from one animal example to another, recounting the bear's "drunken" ferocity and vanity, the wolf's cunning, and so on, Sheyaka concludes that "we Red people" have learned mimetically from the actions of all the different animals. "We Red people have followed their example," says Sheyaka: "we teach our children to respect and obey their elders." This summing up by the "old storyteller" effectively forecloses the prior debates about animal language and intentionality, declaring instead that not only are animals exemplary peoples but also that their peoplehood, as with that of human beings, inheres in maintaining kinship norms of intergenerational respect and obedience.

Recalling that Eastman's animal stories began to appear in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1893, the same year Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* tales were published, we might imagine an Eastman whose aesthetics reproduced, or in some sense apologized for, a colonial status quo. Robert Warrior, in *Tribal Secrets*, reads Eastman's oeuvre as an attempt to gain "sympathy from white audiences for the difficult . . . process [for Native Americans] of being American citizens," adding that Eastman's memoirs are "highly sentimental accounts of his childhood in which he portrays Natives as needy for, worthy of, and ready for inclusion in mainstream civilization" (8). Such a view captures the mediating aspects of Eastman's life and work but unfortunately ascribes an assimilationist motive to both. The positionality of Eastman is complex: born into a Wahpeton Dakota family in 1858, a graduate of Carlisle Indian School and Beloit College, a star football player for Dartmouth, and trained at Boston University as a physician, he also was one of a small group of Native American intellectuals constituting the leadership of the Society of American Indians, a Progressive Era organization that worked to air Native grievances and lobbied for the passage of the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act.

Given his cosmopolitan career, Eastman was often described by his contemporaries as both representing Native tradition and validating the success of United States policies of allotment and assimilation. One Chautauqua brochure for a 1904 Eastman lecture touted, "This strong and interesting Sioux American . . . has come to be regarded as the literary spokesman of his race," and emphasized his position at the brink of both the "natural" world of his "tribal" boyhood and the "artificial" one he encountered at Dartmouth College and Boston University ("Dr. Charles Alexander Eastman"). Such reception, typical of Eastman's white audiences, reproduced the colonial binaries of savage/civilized, nature/culture, and tribal/liberal—binaries that, I argue in this essay, Eastman's work deconstructs even as it repeats their constitutive terms. Such binaries are ostensibly captured in the title of what may be his best-known autobiographical work, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), where Eastman himself often seems to avow the irreconcilable differences between his indigenous upbringing and the white "civilization" in which he served as a lobbyist and popularizer of Dakota politics, culture, and philosophy. But more often than not, his writings suggest the complexity of multiple identifications—and of how they relate to national belonging—without offering any such easy division into worlds or selves. As Mark Rifkin asserts about the Mahican sachem Hendrick Aupaumut, indigenous political resistance in the context of legal and cultural colonialisms may be less an effort to reconcile "worlds" than to "make modes of indigenous peoplehood intelligible within the legal and political discourses of the settler state" ("Remapping" 5).

Building on Rifkin's insight, this essay argues that Eastman's manner of playing Indian for white audiences reads as a complexly ambivalent but nonetheless sustained act of resistance to what Patrick Wolfe identifies as settler colonialism's logic of eliminating

indigenous peoples for the sake of greater access to territory (388). More specifically, Eastman's children's stories invoke traditional Dakota stories and knowledge, and the literary representations of *tiospaye* (literally "camp circle," meaning "extended family") kinship networks embedded in them, as political frameworks with which to analyze and criticize the United States' dispossession of Dakota lands. Instead of positioning Eastman along an axis defined by the poles of either traditionalism or assimilation to settler civilization, I examine how his talking animals recover and rearticulate Dakota peoplehood, and the kinship-based ethical relations of gift giving and receiving at its core, as an imaginative act of decolonization. His idealizations of Dakota modes of sociality are, to put my argument somewhat differently, a means for him to rework and reinvigorate what were and remain historically sovereign forms of Dakota relation based in Dakota cosmology. Neither purely traditional nor assimilated, his fictional remakings of Dakota kinship demonstrate the flexible adaptativeness that Scott Richard Lyons describes when he asserts "the reality of Indian time on the move" (13).

In finding Eastman's fiction to be grounded in a Dakota relationality where power appears as something to be shared among human beings and nonhuman beings and where the political is mediated by kinship norms of economic sufficiency and reciprocal giving, we may enrich existing tribal-nationalist approaches (Ortiz; Warrior; Weaver; Weaver et al.; Womack) to the reading of Native American literatures in their relevant intellectual, cultural, and political contexts. We may also further develop Penelope Myrtle Kelsey's view of Eastman as a "resistance writer" who drew on and affirmed "Dakota cultural practices, identity, and *tiospaye* to a presumably misinformed audience." While Kelsey orients us through her readings of "tribal genres" toward meanings that, all told, loosely signify Dakota nation-

hood (55), her analysis does not explicate the relational logics underlying those genres. Nor does her reading reveal how the tribal nation form—and its provocative extensions of kinship to and with nonhuman beings—works effectively to narrate nonstatist possibilities while also producing a clearly anticolonial imaginary. In this essay I draw out such linkages between the political resistance and the relational logics that both underpin Dakota nationhood and motivate Eastman's anticolonial criticism.

More than an expression of sovereignty rooted in structures of federal recognition or in mimicking the narrations of Nativeness enacted in federal law, Eastman's political critiques through animal peoples attempt to defederalize Dakota peoplehood. That is, his animal tales do precisely what Joanne Barker has called for in Native Americans' present-day decolonization struggles—namely, "to get outside the political legacies of plenary power doctrines, colonialism, and racism and to reimagine the possibilities for Native governance and social relationships" (155). Such a reimagining demands, at least from a dominant-culture perspective, something of a temporal shift, in that the peoplehood imaginary of Eastman allows him to remember forms of sociality and diplomacy that existed before the colonial creation of reservations, when human beings and animal people inhabited a complex network of nations whose boundaries were continually made, transgressed, and reasserted. Instead of simply giving voice to wolves and bears, the voicing of political critiques and demands for the recognition of rights for animal persons acts as a decolonizing gesture and a reclamation of kinship practices that were quite literally outlawed under federal Indian law.² Just as Hohay does in the closing story of *Red Hunters*, Eastman's cast of both human and nonhuman characters in the rest of that collection dramatize kinship ties, or their abrogation, as the result of diplomatic accords upheld or failed. They also implicitly

argue for a form of peoplehood that, because it claims not just equality but also ethical superiority for nonwhites, contests United States legal definitions of Native Americans as being constitutively inferior.³

In order to trace the place-based kinship ethics of Eastman's animal tales, I begin with a brief explication of the *tiospaye*, its main differences from liberal notions of the individual and of Christian citizenship, and its resistive possibilities. I then move to the criticism of United States civilization that appears in his *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, contrasting its renderings of United States temporality with a temporality of pausing that is implicit in the traditional Dakota storytelling genre of *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi* (literally, "long ago stories," but usually glossed as "myths"). I then briefly read his descriptions of Dakota philosophy in his autoethnography *The Soul of the Indian* (1911). In viewing his animal tales as criticisms of United States colonialism, criticisms that by the time Eastman writes *From the Deep Woods* become far less oblique, we see more clearly his innovative translation of Dakota politics into narratives that at once sentimentally appeal to and challenge colonial culture, and we see that these challenges come specifically in relation to Dakota conceptions of peoplehood, power, and gift.

The Dakota *Tiospaye* as Critical Relationality

Throughout *Red Hunters*, Eastman's animals model good kinship behaviors that attest to their status as distinct tribes, nations, or peoples⁴ that are inassimilable to other tribes, nations, or peoples. This modeling constitutes a Dakota formation of peoplehood that contests settler structures of the racialized, atomized family in the liberal nation-state. Such structures drove Indian policy in its adoptions of compulsory education programs for Native children, whose removal from their families into residential and day schools depended, as Beth Piatote asserts, "upon public

understandings of family and tribal-national domesticities as aberrant formations that were hostile to the settler states of the United States and Canada" (49).

In addition to breaking up Native families through educational reforms, the United States settler state attempted to transform kinship and property relations through the 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act, which granted landholdings, usually of 165 acres, to individual American Indians, replacing communal tribal holdings and extending United States federal law and protections to the new landholdings. The language of the act contained explicit provisions for the civilizing of the Indian, making adoption of "the habits of civilized life" a condition of the act's extension of United States citizenship ("Dawes General Allotment Act"). This construal of the bourgeois individual as not only the bearer of rights and citizenship but also as the locus for reckoning kinship is based broadly in the progressive rhetorics of the nineteenth century.⁵ The conflation of civilizing, Christian, and individualistic discourses typified a heterosexual imaginary in which the nuclear family was enshrined as paradigmatic. As Lucy Maddox notes in *Citizen Indians*, this conflation was invoked by white Protestant reformers like Lyman Abbott and Merrill Gates, who saw "the reservation Indian" as a "generic figure, shaped—and limited—entirely by communal, tribal values and thus unfit for the kind of individualizing competition that characterized Christian citizenship" (80). Thomas Biolsi describes how the state constructed new kinds of Lakota individuals beginning in the 1880s through four main modes of subjection: property ownership, determination of competence (to own land), recording of blood quantum, and recording of genealogy. Although Biolsi places the beginning of the construction of the modern Lakota individual in the reservation period (after 1878), the colonial introduction of a modern subject began in earnest among Eastern Dakota as early as 1830, when

the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established their Dakota Mission at Lac qui Parle, in what is now Minnesota, bringing with them a progressive rhetoric that wed Jesus with the plow (*First Fifty Years; Dakota Mission*).

Against such antitribal pressures of early missionization and later allotment policy, Eastman deployed *tiospaye* ethics and notions of peoplehood as assertions of tribal solidarity, persistence, and resilience. As Rifkin argues in *The Erotics of Sovereignty*, Native peoplehood discourses may describe “modes of indigeneity—knowledge, relations to place, and forms of collectivity—that defy state narratives and survive despite being targeted for eradication” (83–84). Other Native studies scholars have asserted important linkages among long-standing relations to land, kinship, and political resistance in their efforts to make more legible the political stakes of peoplehood discourses (Innes; Justice, “Go Away” and *Our Fire*; Moreton-Robinson; Stremlau). The issue of legibility is especially important in Eastman, since I read his children’s tales as criticizing United States colonialism on the basis of tribal epistemologies that were probably missed by his largely white audience and that are still relatively obscure in the secular academy—existing liminally, as Jodi Byrd writes, “in the ungrievable spaces of suspicion and unintelligibility” (xv).

The visions of relationality that Eastman’s talking animals invoke are political ones rooted in the Dakota *tiospaye* as historically lived through the unit of the band. As Alan Trachtenberg explains in his reading of Luther Standing Bear, a Lakota author, “the word *Tiyospaye* [sic] might be understood as meaning those ties of affection and obligation typical of Native families” (282). The obligations Trachtenberg refers to are the many social acts that constitute what Ella Cara Deloria simply calls honoring, which is both a precondition and an ongoing guarantee for social being: “To have standing, one must

have someone, or some persons, who *cared* for him; cared for him enough to honor him; to benefit others in his name.” As a social object that individuals realize through maintaining those ties, *tiospaye* also creates and reproduces communal values, or “the customs and expectations that gave the *Oyate* [the people] its distinctive character, what might be translated into Western terms as its *national ideals*” (“Dakota Ceremonies” 4). It is a shorthand for ethical intersubjectivity, the matrix of kinship relations that help bring about the good life or, in Standing Bear’s words in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933), “ease and comfort in equal measure to all” (123).

I view Eastman’s writing of Dakota ethics as a kind of reinscriptive performance, through which Eastman is able to engage the coloniality of United States nationhood and to imagine the nation form as emergent from the embodied, quotidian details of living in long-occupied lands. The conceptual and cosmological⁶ implications of how people live moral codes inform how I read his depictions of Dakota kinship relationality. In practice, the extended family bridges cosmology and political action; it was the basic unit of Dakota territoriality because it provided the familial metaphors on which gifting, whose ritual sharing of power is at the heart of diplomacy, is founded. In the *tiospaye*, one sees the dynamic relation between Dakota and non-Dakota forms of land tenure and how the Dakota historically reproduced, through a broad constellation of social forms, including ceremony, myth, hunting and fishing, and household practices, the enduring, flexible networks of kin. Instead of being a static entity that was forced to continually retreat from the state, the Dakota reproduced *tiospaye* connections to their environment and to one another. *Tiospaye* and gifting ultimately suggest a view of cosmological plenitude, of the courage to adapt and endure as a people.

Deloria writes, in her popular ethnography *Speaking of Indians*, that observing the

dictates of a nonbiological kinship was “the ultimate aim of Dakota life” and that kinship held “all Dakota people . . . together in a great relationship that was theoretically all-inclusive and co-extensive with the Dakota domain” (25, 24). By “domain” she means not only ancestral lands but also the affective and ethical textures of lived experience and relationship with other Dakota persons. Her defining of kinship against the idea of the bourgeois individual thus refuses the liberal convergence of race, class, and gender around heterosexual, monogamous marriage and the nuclear family. By widening kinship to include animals, spirits, and the land, she troubles the distinction between nature and culture and so sets the stage to recover, as a site of resistance, a nature that federal Indian law has discredited by instrumentalizing it and regarding it only as property. Peoplehood, then, is a fluid sort of kinship: national or political but not statist, with communities rather than individuals as the bearers of rights. I gloss this articulation of kinship as critically relational: nonstatist norms of gifting, reciprocity, and material sufficiency mark the moral limits, if not the failures, of state capitalism.

Competing Temporalities

The affable storytelling style of *Red Hunters* (one 1905 reviewer notes that “the book is simply and pleasantly written, with no affectation or mannerism”) earned Eastman a white readership that saw the animal stories as differing “not as widely as might be wished from the white man’s animal tales now so numerous” (“Charles Eastman”), yet the stories also cite Dakota oral traditions and their relational frameworks. They demonstrate what Kevin Bruyneel calls the refusal of “false choices” between political positions “framed by the imperial binary” (217) of savagery/civilization. Eastman’s citations of Dakota oral tradition, while couched in a capitalistic discursive field (Euro-Western publication)

and written mainly for a white audience, refuses any temporality in which boundaries exist “between an ‘advancing’ people and a ‘static’ people, locating the latter out of time” (Bruyneel 2).

Historically, stories from Dakota oral tradition were heard with careful attention as they were passed down from grandparents to grandchildren. Waziyatawīn (Angela Wilson), in “Grandmother to Granddaughter,” describes this ethic of careful listening as being “rooted in a deep sense of kinship responsibility, a responsibility that relays a culture, an identity, and a sense of belonging essential” to her life (9). Listening and remembering, both ways to uphold one’s kinship obligations, are also profoundly relational activities, grounding the audience “in the needs and concerns of the people whom these narrative actions ultimately benefit in terms of collective memory and social cohesion” (Martinez 42). Oral tradition, and the stories Eastman drew from it for his collection, consequently embody one significant mode of Native historicity.

In his foreword to *Red Hunters*, Eastman explains that “the main incidents in all of . . . [the tales], even those which are unusual and might appear incredible to the white man, are actually current among the Sioux and deemed by them worthy of belief.” The narrative genre he is working in is something like a fable but also quite different, in that it is more than fiction: “When the life-story of an animal is given, the experiences described are typical and characteristic of its kind. Here and there the fables, songs, and superstitious fancies of the Indian are brought in to suggest his habit of mind and manner of regarding the four-footed tribes.” If he is straining here to define genre in a realist-imaginary (or historical-mythic) dichotomy, his marking of the stories as belonging to a preexisting kind bypasses these dichotomies altogether. The Dakota genre of storytelling Eastman draws on is called *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi*, which, as Waziyatawīn notes,

refers in general to stories from the elders that teach about the past and often involve things of a mysterious nature, not easily explainable. . . . Some of the kinds of stories included in this category are the Unktomi stories, those of the Oceti Šakowiŋ, or the Seven Council Fires, stories about animals (whether the rabbit, wolf, bear, eagle, or others) . . . and other "how they came to be stories" (*Remember* 63)

To this pedagogical list she adds that these stories are also a gift from ancestors to help ensure the survival of the people, and that they "have been passed down through the generations and should only be told in the winter when snow is on the ground" (64).

Waziyatawiŋ's mention of the seasonal specificity of *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi* is evocative of Dakota ways of reckoning time: the *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi*, and Eastman's retellings of them in *Red Hunters*, locate animal-human interactions in a Dakota time that is distinctive in several ways. First is the pedagogical pause in the telling of the tales, from one night to the next. Since *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi* are often didactic, having a moral, and since their audience is primarily children, the daily gaps are necessary for the listeners to digest the teachings. Second is the grand pause of winter itself, when the *tiospaye* encamps until hunting season begins, so the storytelling is framed by the seasons. Another of Eastman's early collection of *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi*, *Wigwam Evenings* (1909), describes the sadness of one of the fictional storytellers, Smoky Day, "when the village breaks up for the spring hunt, and story-telling is over for the season" ("Twenty-Sixth Evening"). Finally, in its political aspect, the pause interrupts the forward-moving time of the United States nation and its progressive, civilizing rhetorics.

In *From the Deep Woods*, Eastman's criticism of "the warfare of civilized life" focuses frequently on the failure of United States citizens to share wealth and on both the cause and symptom of this failure, the mechanistic or spiritually evacuated quality of American

society (165). A crucial part of what made up civilization's state of perpetual "warfare" for Eastman was the existence of social inequalities and what he came to view as a corrupt, corrosive relation to capital. Describing his travels across the western states and Canada as a representative of the YMCA, he relates his disappointment in seeing the religiosity of Native converts, or "white[s] and nominally Christian Indians" lead "often to such very small results." Such colonial religiosity "was a machine-made religion" and, further, "was supported by money, and more money could only be asked for on the showing made; therefore too many of the workers were after quantity rather than quality of religious experience" (141). Eastman's disappointment with the failure of Christian civilization to live up to ideals of equality reads as a jeremiad against materialism, the wealth making and wealth keeping that stood against both Dakota and Christian ideals of generosity. Understanding the close ties between modern nationhood and domination, Eastman deployed the term *civilization* derisively to mock United States policies and political practices, reserving the term *nation* for Dakota, other Native tribes, and animals.

More recent critical articulations of nationhood reveal the implications of Eastman's machine metaphor to characterize the American Christian civilization as capitalistic. Benedict Anderson finds that the social space of modernity is distributed in "homogeneous, empty time," which likens the nation both to the "old-fashioned" (French realist) novel and to a sociological organism (26, 25). This temporality, reified as calendrical simultaneity and born of print culture, forms one basis for imagining the nation, and is created through our participation in the reification of the nation's temporality. But for Partha Chatterjee this reification is capitalistic:

Empty homogenous time is the time of capital. . . . But by imagining capital (or moder-

nity) as an attribute of time itself, this view succeeds not only in branding the resistances to it as archaic and backward, but also in securing for capital and modernity their ultimate triumph, regardless of what some people believe or hope, because after all, as everyone knows, time does not stand still. (165)

By historicizing Anderson's notion of temporality—as Eastman historicizes American progressivism—Chatterjee lays the groundwork for his later claims that the time of modernity is utopian, constituting only one possible imagining of temporality. “Politics here,” he concludes, “does not mean the same thing to all people. To ignore this is, I believe, to discard the real for the utopian” (132). A utopian narration of the nation works to subdue alternative concepts of temporality and intersubjectivity. Chatterjee's resistance to Anderson's universalizing sense of temporality is quite portable to Eastman's literary resistance, on the basis of specificities of place, to the claimed universality of United States national time.

Kinship's Locales

A pause, because it is created by and through exchanges—like the sharing of a story between family generations or the more tangible exchanging of gifts that accompanied treaty ceremonies—is time organized not by universally reified spaces but instead born of the embodied encounter with a specific place. As such, it is basically anticapitalistic. The story “The Gray Chieftain” from *Red Hunters* underscores the importance of gifting among the Dakota and also depicts gifting's place-based, relational contexts. The “gray chieftain” is a “spoonhorn” ram named Haykinshkah, who is surveying with his mate the sun setting over the “inner circle of the Bad Lands.” This landscape harbors the gray chieftain's “ancient castle,” a butte that “had been the peaceful home of the big spoonhorns for untold ages,” and becomes home for Haykinshkah's lamb,

who is born that night. This story, as many of Eastman's animal stories do, casts the spoonhorns as a people who define themselves by customs and a continuous history of occupying the land of their ancestors. These customs are revealed in the ewe's caring for her lamb:

She gave suck to the lamb and caressed it for some time before she reluctantly prepared its cradle, according to the custom of her people. She made a little pocket in the side of the cave and gently put her baby in. Then she covered him all up, save the nose and eyes, with dry soil. She put her nose to his little sensitive ear and breathed into it warm love and caution, and he felt and understood that he must keep his eyes closed and breathe gently, lest bear or wolf or man should spy him out when they had found her trail.

The ewe's breathing into the lamb's ear “warm love and caution” and the lamb's understanding, which involves both affect and intellect, recall Waziyatawin's remarks on Dakota oral tradition as something intimately familial, “the story of one family, one lineage, reflecting the ancient village structure and the community that united those with a collective identity and memory” (Wilson, “Grandmother” 12). It also reflects the power of *hitunkaŋkaŋpi* to “mark” their listeners with knowledge or “leave an imprint on the listener,” as do habits of others carefully observed (Wilson, *Remember* 64). Likewise, the making of a cradle out of earth literalizes rootedness and performs an indigenous ontology of intimacy with homelands. The spoonhorns' continuous occupation of territory and their enduring customs describe a common temporality grounded in the bodily knowledge that the land imparts. When two “wild hunters” named Wacootay and Grayfoot appear, having set out for Cedar Butte to kill a ram, we overhear them debating the location of their prey. “I think, friend, you have mistaken the haunts of the spoonhorn,” says Wacootay, “to test his friend.” In reply,

Grayfoot stresses the similarities between human beings and nonhuman beings in matters of attachment to certain places: “‘This is his home—I know it,’ replied Grayfoot. ‘And in this thing the animal is much like ourselves. They will not leave their old haunt unless forced to do so either by lack of food or overwhelming danger.’” Grayfoot’s remarks point out how attachment to a place may constitute a sense of home; they also reference Dakota resistance to dispossession by settlers.

As the hunters continue their search for rams, they begin to see how affective attachment adds another dimension to responsibility for the land and for the others who live on it. When the two sets of characters, human and ram, meet, the hunters catch their first sight of the gray chieftain, who “stood alone upon a pedestal-like terrace, from which vantage-point it was his wont to survey the surrounding country every morning.” In a conspiratorial aside, the narrator adds, “If the secret must be told, he had done so for years, ever since he became the head chief of the Cedar Butte clan.” With this aside, the story’s description of the ram as a chief becomes more specific, more historical, more bound to place, and, in the rehearsal of the ram chief’s credentials, it includes an ethic of sufficiency:

It is the custom of their tribe that when a ram attains the age of five years he is entitled to a clan of his own, and thereafter must defend his right and supremacy against all comers. His experience and knowledge are the guide of his clan. In view of all this, the gray chieftain had been very thorough in his observations. There was not an object anywhere near the shape of bear, wolf, or man for miles around his kingdom that was not noted, as well as the relative positions of rocks and conspicuous trees.

Haykinshkah’s survey of the land from the vantage of a central point, a node for the ram people’s relations with other animals, conveys more than a generalized comment on his perspicacity. His daily vigil and observations em-

phasize how the ram is intent on the survival of his clan and how that purpose informs both the sensual knowledge of his kingdom and the legitimization of his people’s place there. Vine Deloria, in *God Is Red*, describes a “sacred center” in “Indian tribal religions” that “enables a people to look out along the four dimensions and locate their lands, to relate all historical events within the confines of this particular land, and to accept responsibility for it” (66).

Key for my discussion of Eastman’s animal persons is Deloria’s linking of an embodied encounter with a land to a sense of responsibility for its well-being and for its inhabitants. The long-standing status of the animals as peoples always already places them in political relationship with human beings. In the spoonhorn story, the responsibility appears as an ethic of sufficiency. Despite the spoonhorn chief’s past vigilance, the hunters happen upon Haykinshkah during a lethargic moment, when the “younger members of the clan” were to assume the watch, and as he looks off “toward the distant hills,” they debate whether they should shoot him. Grayfoot, impressed that the ram “is a real chief” who “looks mysterious and noble,” argues for a delay, saying, “Let us know him better. . . . I never care to shoot an animal while he is giving me a chance to know his ways.” He also notes, “We have plenty of buffalo meat. We are not hungry.” This sufficiency argument shows up repeatedly throughout Eastman’s writings and is foundational to his criticism of the United States’ claim to be a greater civilization. The argument is received by Eastman’s characters in different ways. Grayfoot, for instance, speaks it as if it were a matter of universal knowledge among his tribe, while his friend, Wacootay, admits to his friend and to himself that “he had never thought of it in just that way before,” being “chiefly moved . . . in the matter of the hunt” by “the desire for meat.” Such differences index intratribal politics but also the need for, and possibility of, a

Dakota condemnation of the capitalistic logics of extraction and accumulation. After not shooting Haykinshkah and agreeing instead to track a ewe whose trail has excited their curiosity, they come upon the cave where the mother ewe has buried her lamb in its “cradle” but reveals the hiding place with “a faint ‘Ba-a-a!’” Again, Wacootay impatiently reaches for an arrow to kill the lamb, but Grayfoot stops him by reminding his friend that “we want horn for ladles and spoons. The mother is right. We must let her babe alone.”

After the ewe has fled with her lamb, the narrative elaborates its sufficiency argument by explaining why taking more than is needed from animals, is wrong. “After a long silence,” Grayfoot invokes an affective commonality beyond linguistic differences: “So it is . . . that all the tribes of earth have some common feeling. I believe they are people as much as we are. The Great Mystery has made them what they are.” In this summation, he conveys his sense of why accepting responsibility for both a place and those who dwell in it is appropriate if not necessary. Observing first an equivalence among “all the tribes of earth,” which bars ontological division among them, he returns to the story collection’s opening problem of viewing language as a marker of persons. A kind of sympathetic communication exists between human beings and animals. In “seem[ing] to understand their thought,” Grayfoot locates this power to communicate in a broader narrative of shared cosmological origins, in which “[t]he Great Mystery [Wakan Tan̄ka] has made the animals what they are”—that is, the “silent people,” as Eastman calls them in the foreword of *Red Hunters*.

The Nation-State Translated

The complex figure of Wakan Tan̄ka, which is often translated as “Great Spirit,” appears as a nexus for interpersonal relations in both Eastman’s writings and Dakota philosophy.

In his essay “The Sioux Mythology,” Eastman evokes Wakan Tan̄ka through the image of the medicine lodge and a distinctly Dakota version of the biblical commandments: “Thou shalt often make a holy feast or a lodge feast to the God. Thou shalt not spill the blood of any of thy tribe. Thou shalt not steal what belongs to another. Thou shalt always remember that the choicest part of thy provision belongs to God” (88). His “thou shalt nots” place a premium on maintaining kin relations in ways that not only go beyond but also actually invert the Mosaic commandments’ prohibitions against bad relations with one’s neighbor. Through their emphasis on preparing a feast “to the God” or the Great Mystery, they have the effect of drawing people together in a ceremony of forging mutual obligations. As Raymond DeMallie notes, Dakota cosmology has historically reflected mutual relations among human and other-than-human persons. The *wakan* beings that made up Wakan Tan̄ka, numbering sixteen according to “some holy men,” included “sun, moon, wind, Thunder-beings, earth, rock, White Buffalo Woman, and a variety of invisible spirit forms.” These beings formed a “oneness” that “was symbolized in kin relationships that bound all together and provided accepted patterns for interaction.” This oneness was the template for human interactions, such that “human relationships—parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives—were reflections of these greater, more fundamental relationships established by the *wakan* beings” (81).

The foreword to *Red Hunters* expresses this kinship succinctly, naming the “grandfather” of “these silent people,” the animals, as “the Great Mystery,” because they know “the laws of their life so well!” “They must,” concludes a “philosopher and orator of the Red Men . . . have for their maker our maker. Then they are our brothers!” More than just affirming ontological solidarity, invoking the Great Mystery here authorizes

a discourse of adoption that is dramatized in the opening story of *Red Hunters*, "The Great Cat's Nursery." Eastman stages Dakota adoption practices, practices that resulted from white territorial encroachments, through a puma mother who adopts another puma's kit. The kit

was the age of her own baby which she had left not long before, and upon second thought she was not sure but that he was her own and that he had been stolen. . . . So she took him home with her. There she found her own kitten safe and glad to have a playmate, and Nakpaksa decided, untroubled by any pangs of conscience, to keep him and bring him up as her own.

The adoptive mother, who is later killed by white hunters, is not only the victim of settler aggression. Eastman is playing on, and extending, familial sympathies, while also showing the empathetic (and so also political or diplomatic) failure of whites who act as if they have no relatives.

In *Red Hunter*'s most pointedly anticolonial tale, "On Wolf Mountain," a "tribe" of wolves convenes a council meeting to debate what should be done about a rancher's violent encroachment on their territory. The rancher, Hank Simmons, regards the wolves as mere nuisances until, starved, they attack his herd of sheep and threaten to kill him. By asserting wolves' rights to the land, based on an ontological (rather than historical) relation with it, and by representing their slow starvation at being driven off their land, Eastman replays the Dakota disposessions that resulted from the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux:

The large Mayala wolf with his mate and their five full-grown pups had been driven away from their den on account of their depredations upon the only paleface in the Big Horn valley [Hank Simmons]. It is true that, from their stand-point, he had no right to encroach upon their hunting-grounds. ("Treaty")

The wolves are not enemies of all human beings; they made alliances in the past with the Dakota. A Dakota-wolf reciprocity appears, for example, in hunting practices, about which Eastman recounts the custom that human beings leave behind "much meat upon the plains for the wolf people." Out of this mutual respect, this hunting by the wolves with "these Red hunters as guide and companion," an accord takes shape, in which the wolves and Dakota act together to drive away Simmons, whom the narrator derides as "quite another kind of man who is their [common] enemy."

Examining United States–Dakota treaty history reveals how a Dakota kinship logic extended to the land and its occupants. The human-wolf reciprocity in Eastman's tale serves as a basis for evaluating that history and the actions of settler society. In the 1851 treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, Eastern Dakota tribes ceded all but a thin strip of land along the Minnesota River ("Treaty"). The treaties made them dependent on annuities, many of which were withheld or lost to graft among Indian agents over the next ten years. The 1862 United States–Dakota War was a direct result of United States failure to uphold the kinship obligations that had been formed through the treaties and of the starvation among Dakota stemming from this neglect. Following a resolution by the *tiotipi* (Dakota Soldier's Lodge) to acquire food through force, four young Dakota men killed five settlers near Acton, Minnesota, on 17 August 1862. The first large-scale attacks against settlers in the Lower Sioux Agency the next morning followed another meeting of the *tiotipi*, who convinced the reluctant former spokesman for the Mdewakanton tribe, Taoyateduta (Little Crow) to lead the fight ("Timeline"). The motive for these attacks was similar to that of the wolves on Simmons, in Eastman's story. Before the attack, the wolves hold a council meeting in which they air their grievances against the human encroacher:

A gaunt old wolf, with only one eye and an immensely long nose, occupied the place of honor. No human ear heard the speech of the chieftain, but we can guess what he had to say. Doubtless he spoke in defence of his country, the home of his race and that of the Red man, whom he regarded with toleration. It was altogether different with that hairy-faced man who had lately come among them to lay waste the forests and tear up the very earth about his dwelling, while his creatures devoured the herbage of the plain. It would not be strange if war were declared upon the intruder.

A Dakota scout, after taking shelter in a cave where the wolf people reached their decision to declare war on the rancher, returns to a Dakota council meeting to report the news:

"The paleface," said they, "has no rights in this region. It is against our interest to allow him to come here, and our brother of the wandering foot well knows it for a menace to his race. He has declared war upon the sheepman, and it is good. Let us sing war-songs for the success of our brother!"

In both these passages, the explicit statement of rights and the claim to territory (the Dakota do not "allow" the rancher "to come here") powerfully show that the brotherhood between the Dakota and the wolves is more than an abstract figure of solidarity. It is a citation of both treaty history and Dakota knowledge of wolf-human relationships, as Luther Standing Bear recounts in his collection of Lakota tales *Stories of the Sioux* and Ella Deloria writes in "The Rock-Cave Dweller." Both these texts speak to the importance of human-wolf reciprocity and personal sacrifice as Dakota ethical norms. In a Standing Bear tale, alliance is founded on an act of sacrifice by Marpiyawin, an old woman who leaves her camp and human kin to look for her dog even though a blizzard is immanent.

The alliance obligates the human beings to join the wolves in war for their mutual success. Kinship between the wolf and Dakota

nations, then, serves as an organizing logic for military and political action. This alliance is further motivated by the genocidal intentions of the white settlers, who Eastman represents as wanting to poison the entire wolf nation. A trader, chiding Simmons for his lack of initiative, says that extermination would have saved Simmons's ranch: "Well, I told you before to take out all the strychnine you could get hold of. We have got to rid the country of the Injuns and gray wolves before civilization will stick in this region!" Here, Eastman's portrayal is designed to show that the settler's image of himself as a civilizing agent is distorted. As in a Lacanian mirror, non-Dakota readers see themselves for the first time reflected back grotesquely. His purpose is not only to show the wolves' and Dakotas' ethical superiority but also to shame his white readers. This tactic, based on the hope that non-Dakota readers will recognize themselves in the trader and Simmons, may well be mistaken, since the social work that shaming does is quite different in Dakota and other indigenous contexts than in liberal, secular societies, where, as Marx and Engels note in *The German Ideology*, forms of relation are transformed by competition into ones that are "purely monetary" (372).

Because of this capitalistic transformation, Eastman's writings and citations of Dakota oral tradition stand as utopian efforts to enact noninstrumental relations. In *The Soul of the Indian*, Eastman gives an account of the world's "first treaty," made between a human being, Little Boy Man, and the animals, because the animals see Little Boy Man's superior hunting ability. Created by Inishnaechage, the "First-Born" was a "being in the likeness of a man, yet more than man." Little Boy Man was made out of Inishnaechage's loneliness, who sought to make "not a mate but a brother." Although Little Boy Man is Inishnaechage's brother, he is also very much like a son, receiving "rules" and "counsels" from his elder brother, to

whom, Eastman writes, "we trace many of our most deep-rooted beliefs and most sacred customs." The conflict between animal people ("who were in those days a powerful nation") and Little Boy Man begins when Unktomi, the spider, who sees the lone human being growing "in wit and ingenuity," advises the animal people, "who all loved the Little Boy Man because he was so friendly and so playful," to kill him before "he will be the master of us all!" In a scene that recalls the death and rebirth of Osiris, the water monsters act on Unktomi's advice, killing the first human being and hiding his body in the sea, only to see him "given life again" by First-Born in an inipi, or "sweat lodge."

The mutual trust and relation of kinship between the first human being and the animal people were only interrupted by Unktomi. Little Boy Man, after his death and rebirth, resumes his peaceful life with the animal people, learning their languages and customs, until Unktomi again "sowed dissension among the animals, and messages were sent into all quarters of the earth, sea, and air, that all the tribes might unite to declare war upon the solitary man who was destined to become their master." First-Born, seeing his brother sorrowful, "naked and unarmed," arms him for the coming battle, which finds Little Boy Man fighting buffalo, elk, bears, thunder beings, and swarming insects ("the little people of the air"). With the help of his elder brother's advice, Little Boy Man overcomes all his animal opponents, who sue for peace and make the first treaty: "[T]hey must ever after furnish man with flesh for his food and skins for clothing, though not without effort and danger on his part." In return, human hunters honor those animals for the sacrifice of their lives, and the hunter, out of

respect for the immortal part of the animal, his brother, often leads him so far as to lay out the body of his game in state and decorate the head with symbolic paint or feath-

ers. Then he stands before it in the prayer attitude, holding up the filled pipe, in token that he has freed with honor the spirit of his brother, whose body his need compelled him to take to sustain his own life.

The human-animal relationship outlined in Eastman's recounting of the first treaty, determined by both physical need and ethical agreement, demonstrates that the political realm extends to nonhuman persons who are bound to human beings in a web of kinship rights and obligations. It also indicates that war is justified when waged in defense and so is an anticolonial assertion about the just cause of Dakota in the 1862 war. The account is told not out of nostalgia but "to educate a derelict treaty partner," as Robert A. Williams, Jr., notes in *Linking Arms Together*, and to allow "once alienated groups to imagine themselves as connected in a world of human diversity and conflict" (84–85). Eastman's rhetorical purposes in the Little Boy Man story become evident—to educate, certainly, but also to shame and thereby draw back into proper ethical relation those who broke their promise to act as a good relative should, with generosity and sharing.

Whereas commodity forms of the gift predominate in a market society, gift giving among the Dakota, as among other Native peoples, is strongly linked to establishing and maintaining relationships at personal, communal, and cosmic levels. Kenneth Morrison argues that "if 'power' differentiates between personal entities who otherwise share the same manner of being, then the category 'gift' becomes the central ethical trajectory of religious practice." Although he writes in the context of seventeenth-century Algonkian philosophy, this statement and his further observation that "positive, powerful others share; negative, powerful others withhold" apply well to Eastman (160–61). In linking power with gift, Morrison elucidates how kinship, as a way of allying with those out-

side one's people, went beyond metaphoric analogy to motivate behavioral responsibility and material practices of sharing. Instead of viewing whites as ontologically different from the Dakota, Eastman regards them as powerful others whose negativity lies in their withholding of generosity. That the Dakota were and are bound up in inextricable relationship with whites (note that Eastman was married to a white woman, Elaine Goodale Eastman) adds moral force to the shaming.

Eastman's translations of the nation form into Dakota terms through writings that sought to undercut the designative authority of United States law had the effect of asserting the primacy of indigenous ethics as a long-standing and legitimate basis for sovereign political action. In writing about the past, Eastman pointed to the failures of a national model that was founded on a temporality of abstract capital and on liberal assumptions about the necessity of individual ownership of property, an ownership that has lacked certain ethical protections offered by consensus politics based in a relational cosmology. The grossly unequal distribution of wealth, the graft, and a Christianity evacuated of communitarian concern that Eastman observed in his life up to the publication of *From the Deep Woods* find a powerful tribal retort in his animal stories. Their commitment to an acknowledgment of and respect for persons of various kinds out of a sense of the power inherent in alterity, and their commitment to an ethic of reciprocal gifting, constitutes a model of peoplehood (and, by extension, nationhood) that was and remains relevant as an alternative to the nation-state and its tendency to abuse its power. In constructing a tacit theory of political legitimacy that recognizes multiple national centers—indeed, a vast field of nations made up of human and animal collectives—Eastman suggests not just the critically corrective potential of Dakota philosophy and forms of governance for non-Native society but also their rehabili-

tative role for tribal communities in the ongoing work of decolonization.

NOTES

1. Historically, Dakota was the term used to describe a number of different bands, including the Lakota, or Titunwan, who share kinship ties with both Eastern Dakota—who are often referred to collectively as Isanti (Santee) but are composed of Sisitunwan, Bdewakantunwan, Wahpehtunwan, and Wahpekute bands—and the Middle Dakota bands of Ihankunwan and Ihankunwan. The alliance or confederacy of these seven bands is called the Oceti Šakowin ("People of the Seven Council Fires"). For a full account of the divisions of Dakota-, Lakota-, and Nakota-speaking bands, see Waziyatawin (Angela Wilson), *Remember* 4–5.

2. The 1883 code of Indian offenses created an apartheid-like criminal code that banned Native Americans from social feasts, plural marriages, ritual specialists ("medicine men"), mourning and memorial give-aways (regarded as "the destruction of property" that left the family of the deceased "in desolation and want"), the paying of dowries, and alcohol (*Rules*).

3. The legal doctrine of Native wardship was based on the construal of Native peoples in the United States as "domestic dependent nations" rather than independent sovereigns and as being subject to congressional power (*Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*).

4. Eastman's tales differ from posthumanist concerns for dethroning human sovereignty in that they emphasize ethical meanings that emerge at the crossroads of place (as land historically occupied), time (as occupation and care for a place), and peoplehood (the existential basis for and way of mediating power). In his tale "The Gray Chieftain," Eastman glosses peoplehood as "knowledge."

5. Joel Pfister's *Individuality Incorporated* reads part of the "ideological violence" of assimilation discourses in their being "packaged as regeneration through individuality" (45).

6. I view the cosmological as the generative unfolding over time—but unfolding most rapidly, most violently, in response to colonial pressures—of core cultural categories like those that Marshall Sahlin describes in his account of British-Hawaiian relations, *Islands of History*. He adopts a modified form of Saussurean structuralism, arguing that even with the "most abstract representation" of cultural categories, "which is cosmology," there is a more or less fluid unfolding: "the categories are set in motion" (xv).

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Idylls of the Buddh': Buddhist Modernism and Victorian Poetics in Colonial Ceylon

SEBASTIAN LECOURT

IN 1884 A REVIEWER IN LONDON'S *SPECTATOR* PREDICTED GREAT THINGS for Edwin Arnold's long poem about the Buddha, *The Light of Asia* (1879). "Two hundred years hence," he ventured, "Mr. Arnold, half-forgotten at home, except by students, may, amongst the innumerable peoples who profess Buddhism, be regarded as a Psalmist" ("Light"). Although the reviewer was right that Arnold would eventually be a name only among specialists in Victorian poetry, the rest of this prophecy sounds like a colonialist fantasy of a Western writer re-instructing the colonized in their own traditions. The reviewer was clearly impressed by the vogue that *The Light* was enjoying in Britain and America as it ran through more than thirty authorized editions by 1885 and garnered praise from the likes of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who described it as "so lofty that there is nothing with which to compare it but the New Testament" (Clausen 183–84; Wright 73). (Matthew Arnold, during his 1883–84 lecture tour of the United States, was annoyed to find himself repeatedly mistaken for the poem's author [Dillingham 124–25].)

But in fact the second half of the *Spectator's* prediction would also hold true. For *The Light of Asia*, conceived during Arnold's stint as principal of the British Government Sanskrit College at Pune, was even then being taken up by an emerging anglophone readership in Ceylon and made central to a Buddhist revival and incipient nationalist movement on the island. Arnold himself would be hailed as a hero on visiting Ceylon in 1886 (Harris 96; Wright 115–16); stopping by Vidyodaya College, a center of the revival, he would be told by the monk Weligama Sri Sumangala "that 'The Light of Asia' was constantly read in the Sangha, and that arrangements were being made to translate it into Pali and Sin[h]alese," the sacred and secular languages of Ceylonese Buddhism (Arnold, *India Revisited* 270; see "Re-

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ception"). Indeed, a search of *WorldCat* shows a sudden wave of Asian-language translations and adaptations appearing in the early twentieth century, including a Gujarati version in 1921, a Thai version in 1927, a Japanese version in 1944, and a Telegu version in 1959.

This essay reconstructs the key role that Arnold's poem played in spreading a now familiar Western image of Buddhism as a nondogmatic creed of mindfulness and self-cultivation. We typically associate this construction, sometimes called Protestant Buddhism or Buddhist modernism, with contemporary Western self-help culture, but, in reality, it emerged as a kind of hybrid formation from the Victorian colonial encounter in Ceylon.¹ During the 1850s, British missionaries began publishing a series of texts that redescribed Buddhism as a suitable opponent for evangelical Christianity—a competing religion of personal salvation focused on the life of a moral savior. *The Light of Asia* was based primarily on these missionary texts but had the curious effect of encouraging readers to interpret Protestant Buddhism in terms that the missionaries had never intended. Many Anglo-American intellectuals, for instance, read Arnold's poem as evidence that Buddhism was a kind of model religion for modernity, one that avoided the literalism and authoritarianism of Christianity. Readers in Ceylon, meanwhile, took the vision of Buddhism that they found in *The Light of Asia* as the basis for a new politics of cultural identity.

In this way, I argue, Arnold's poem offers an exemplary case for thinking about the globalization of literary forms—how forms travel transnationally, what sorts of political baggage they accrue, and whether that baggage can be resisted or reinvented. *The Light of Asia* foregrounds the fact that Victorian comparative religion was a fundamentally literary enterprise that used textual forms to give comparable contours to different bodies of material. Just as Goethe and other early literary comparativists sought to categorize a wide range

of literatures under European rubrics like lyric and epic, so did texts such as Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha* and John Campbell Oman's *The Great Indian Epics* (both 1894) reorganize non-Western religious traditions around concepts taken from the Bible or from secular European literature. Critics have grown wary of this formalist approach to comparativism on the grounds that it tends to impose Western constructs on diverse local materials, pulling them into the orbit of colonialist knowledge and power.² The case of *The Light of Asia*, however, suggests that literary forms can acquire global resonance through their capacity to facilitate several contradictory reworkings. If Arnold's poem was instrumental in propagating a certain formal construction of Buddhism, this was in part because it allowed distinct audiences to interpret that form in contrasting ways. Where Arnold's missionary sources had designed Protestant Buddhism to portray Buddhism as Christianity's lesser precursor, other readers in both the West and in Ceylon took it as evidence that Buddhism was an equally significant world religion with a right to defend its home turf. Protestant Buddhism, in short, acquired global currency precisely because it offered these contending parties a set of common terms in which to stage their disagreements.

More broadly, the reception history of Arnold's poem highlights the power of specific media to influence the creative uptake of literary forms. The fact that various audiences interpreted Protestant Buddhism differently, I suggest, was a function not just of their competing religious and political positions but also of the ambiguous connotations that long blank-verse poems wielded in the Victorian world system. To English readers, Arnold's Tennysonian epic carried overtones of the antique that made the resemblance the poem constructed between Buddhism and Christianity look like a product of evolutionary continuity, with the Buddha standing in relation to Jesus as ancient epic poetry stood

vis-à-vis modern prose. To South Asian readers, by contrast, the poem managed to evoke both the modernizing cachet of colonial education and the special esteem that poetry enjoyed in traditional Sinhalese court culture and on both counts lent impetus to an emerging Buddhist nationalism in Ceylon. What we see here, in other words, is that a text's form and its medium often globalize in contrary ways. Where forms establish abstract shaping patterns that can be creatively reinterpreted, a text's medium carries particular kinds of prestige that subtly underwrite that interpretive activity. World literature, by this account, is something that takes shape in the push and pull between organizing literary forms that may be freely repurposed and the distinctive media formats that locate them in asymmetrical networks of global power. And one way to link the two is through an understanding of genres as forms whose repetition is grounded in the expectations of specific audiences in certain media environments.

[I]

Although European descriptions of Buddhist societies go back as far as the medieval period, the notion of Buddhism as a unified body of doctrines was in many ways a Victorian coinage. Before the nineteenth century there was little consensus among European scholars as to whether the figures variously called Shākyamuni (in India), Fó (in China), and Phât (in what would become Vietnam) had any historical connection to one another, just as the different strands of Asian Buddhism were themselves highly independent and idiosyncratic (see Almond 7–12; Franklin 10). This situation began to change in 1784, when Sir William Jones launched the Asiatic Society of Bengal, whose house journal published translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Pali, and in the 1830s, when Brian Houghton Hodgson of the East India Company brought a collection of Sanskrit

texts to the Royal Asiatic Society of London and the Société Asiatique de Paris, where they would be translated by Eugène Burnouf (Almond 7–53; Franklin 10–12; Harris 15–16; Clarke 74–76).

But perhaps the strongest impetus to conceptualize Buddhism as a single, pan-Asian phenomenon came from a less celebrated source: British missionaries working in Ceylon during the 1830s and 1840s. Having assumed full rule of the island in 1815, the British gradually loosened restrictions on missionary activity and unleashed a wave of preaching and printing (Malalgoda 191–205; Bond 19–21). Early missionary publishers soon discovered, however, that Sinhalese Buddhism was in many respects not a text-centered tradition and that, between the various hagiographic stories used in popular preaching and the great trove of Pali scriptures guarded by monastic elites, most of them written on palm leaves stored in heavy wooden boxes, there was no single, dominant scriptural text at which Christian pamphlets and tracts could take aim.³ For this reason the 1850s saw a number of missionaries begin to assemble what might be called Buddhist digests: single-volume redactions of various Buddhist writings, translated into English, that could be compared polemically with the Bible. One of the earliest of these was the Reverend Robert Spence Hardy's *A Manual of Buddhism* (1853), which described itself as "the first attempt . . . to form an analysis of the deeds and doctrines attributed to [Siddhartha Gautama]"—"the native authors," he explained, not being especially "studious of method" (x). Hardy, a prolific publisher who had spent several decades working in Ceylon's mission fields, based his text mostly on Sinhalese sources and organized it so as to privilege biography (Harris 63–68). The volume began with three chapters on Indian cosmology and continued with several chapters treating the Buddha's prior incarnations before settling into a lengthy account of his

life in the person of Prince Siddhartha Gautama: his sheltered upbringing in his father's palace, his discovery that life outside the palace was marred by suffering and death, his renunciation of his privilege and adoption of ascetic discipline, and his final attainment of enlightenment by transcending desire.

Hardy's volume helped set a narrative template for subsequent digests, such as the Reverend Paul Bigandet's *The Life, or Legend, of Gautama* (1858), the Reverend Samuel Beal's *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures* (1871), and T. W. Rhys Davids's *Buddhism* (1877). That template included a focus on the life of Gautama instead of the supernatural deeds attributed to him, on his youth rather than his adult career, and on the organic relation between his coming-of-age experiences and his religious teachings. Rhys Davids took the formula even farther than Hardy had; for example, where Hardy's *Manual* had dealt largely in Sinhalese texts, Rhys Davids limited himself to the older Pali materials, which he deemed less full of "legendary matter" (75). Along the same lines, Rhys Davids's text pauses periodically to translate key metaphysical episodes into psychological terms—interpreting Pali descriptions of Gautama's battle against "a visible Tempter and his wicked angels, armed by all kinds of weapons" (36) as an allegory of his inward struggle with religious doubt: "The philosophy he had trusted in seemed to be doubtful; the penance he had practised so long had brought no certainty, no peace; and all his old temptations came back upon him with renewed force. . . . Were all his labours to be lost? Was there *no* sure ground to stand on?" (39–40). Finally, and most important, Rhys Davids cast such episodes as part of a story of personal cultivation that formed the heart of the mature Buddhist philosophy. Buddhism, in his estimation, was above all "a system of intellectual and moral self-culture" (55). Hence the overall layout of Rhys Davids's volume, which paired a relation of Gautama's life with

a summary of his adult teachings, as though they represented two halves of a whole.

What these digests offered, in effect, was a kind of literary form for representing Buddhism. By form I do not mean the empirical details of syntax or meter that we look for when doing a close reading but rather the more Kantian understanding of form as a conceptual formula that can be applied to different materials—"a matter of distributions and arrangements . . . shapes and configurations . . . ordering principles," as Caroline Levine puts it (3).⁴ Form in this sense is at once a political concept, since it represents what Jacques Rancière calls a distribution of the sensible (Levine 3; Rancière 25), and an interdisciplinary one, insofar as it can designate the organizing logic of any text, from a poem to a travelogue. For our purposes, the important thing is that form is the site at which an ideological construction becomes a matter of particular textual choices: which features of Buddhist literature did you need to depict, and in what order, to offer a fitting portrait of the religion as such? In this case, Hardy and Rhys Davids constructed a narrative arc that highlighted those elements of the Buddha's life and teachings that best fit a conception of religion as individual and moral. Their Buddha was a great teacher who preached a doctrine of self-humbling that anyone, prince or pauper, could follow and a protesting reformer who criticized the rites and dogmas of the Brahmins much as Jesus would later denounce the hypocrisy of the Pharisees or Martin Luther the elaborate Catholic machinery of atonement (Franklin 33–34). In this respect the missionary digests corroborate the connection long noted by critics between Protestant self-discipline and the ethical topography of the *bildungsroman* (see Qualls 1–16). The story of Gautama, as they told it, followed a trajectory that led from a privileged upbringing through a period of loss and self-discovery before arriving at the fruitful tension between self and

society that one finds in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96).

The anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere famously dubbed this form Protestant Buddhism on the grounds that its goal was to seduce the Sinhalese into thinking about their religion in terms that implicitly favored the missionaries'—that is, as a set of doctrines preached by a founder that could be appraised in terms of their moral effects on individuals (Obeyesekere; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 6–7). Obeyesekere, we might say, was implicitly following the Lukácsian understanding of form as an abstract of political ideologies that can, in turn, carry those ideologies into new contexts.⁵ He was also anticipating Webb Keane, Saba Mahmood, and other recent critics who have explored how Protestant "semiotic forms," especially the figure of the private reader, have played a crucial role in training colonized peoples to think like Western secular subjects (Keane 4; Mahmood). Protestant Buddhism, however, belies any account of form as a one-way ideological imposition inasmuch as its global popularity has been driven by creative interpretations that the missionaries hardly anticipated. In Europe and America, it has influenced popular understandings of Buddhism as a "good" religion preoccupied with individual morality instead of with theological dogmas and institutions. Although we tend to associate this view of Buddhism with the postwar American craze for Asian spirituality (see McMahan 117–47), it first emerged in the Victorian period from heterodox readings of Hardy's and Rhys Davids's digests. The liberal journalist William Courtney, for instance, placed this reimagined Buddha in a global pantheon of freethinking iconoclasts:

Gotama promulgates his doctrine in opposition to the official ritualism of the Brahmins. Christ is the free-thinking reformer, as compared with the dead formalism of the Scribes and Pharisees. Socrates has as his foes sophists, demagogues, and those who accused him

of "introducing new divinities." All these reformers refuse to incorporate in their systems any physical or metaphysical theories; all alike start with common topics of every day life, with parables from nature and apocryphal tales of unvarnished simplicity. (65)

In turn, writers of a more avant-garde persuasion, including the Theosophist Henry Steel Olcott, took the digests to present Buddhism as a more refined version of Protestant individualism—a religion that had transcended the use of ritual and mythology altogether (see Prothero 85–133; Tweed 26–77).

On Ceylon, however, these missionary digests would receive a very different reading from a new class of native merchants and civil servants who were educated in English schools that taught composition through readings of the King James Bible and various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English poets (Bond 15–16; Gooneratne, *English Literature* 19–39).⁶ Many members of this new clerkly class, as Karin Barber calls their African counterparts (7), remained Buddhists and in fact turned to the work of Hardy and Rhys Davids for readable descriptions of their own faith (Malalgoda 216). They were among the first subscribers to Rhys Davids's Pali Text Society (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 210) and in 1873 even circulated a signed address thanking the founder for his "desire to translate and publish all the Buddhist Pali books into the English language" ("Singhalese"). They also found natural allies in the now politically disempowered monasteries, whose leaders were seeking to reconstitute their social authority (Bond 21–22; 61). Together, this new Buddhist reading public saw some very different possibilities in the formal resemblance that Rhys Davids had constructed between Buddhism and Christianity. In particular, where the missionary digests had been designed to depoliticize Buddhism by reframing it as a personal creed that was interchangeable with any other, these readers took the image of a self-cultivated teacher bucking Hindu tradition

to give Buddhist monks a new importance as critics of imperial power. In this way texts such as Hardy's helped spur the emergence of a Buddhist revival and proto-nationalist movement in which monks and laity worked side by side as defenders of the faith against the British. One vociferous leader of this movement, Anagarika Dharmapala—the son of a Sinhalese furniture merchant who became the most prominent Buddhist activist of late-Victorian Ceylon—fashioned himself as a kind of lay monk who brought the discipline of monastic life to everyday existence (Bond 53–61; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 205–15). Meanwhile, the monk Mohottiwatte Gunananda would appropriate not just the idea of Protestant Buddhism but also various missionary media. In 1862 he established the Society for the Propagation of Buddhism that, with the help of an old missionary printing press, began to disseminate anti-Christian tracts and pamphlets (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 203; Malalgoda 220–21). Then in the late 1860s Gunananda faced off against Wesleyan missionaries in a number of debates (Bond 47–48; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 203–04; Malalgoda 222), culminating in a famous 1873 encounter at Panadura that saw him adopt the gestures and intonations of an evangelical preacher. Whereas Sinhalese preachers had traditionally lowered their eyes and remained seated on partially screened platforms, Gunananda orated standing up while gesticulating dramatically at an open book (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 218–19; Malalgoda 226). The Panadura debate is remembered today as a pivotal moment in early Sinhalese nationalism, and the image of Gunananda posed book in hand and finger aloft has found its way into everything from public statues to postage stamps (Harris 203).⁷ The image has such power, in effect, because it represents the reappropriation of several different missionary forms and practices: the stance and gestures of the preacher proclaiming saving truth, the enterprise of scriptural

dispute, and above all the image of the Buddhist ascetic as a para-Protestant hero, now transformed into a new opponent of empire.

[II]

The case of Protestant Buddhism, in short, suggests that literary forms are able to spread from one cultural context to another not just by force of ideological imposition but also through their capacity to encourage creative reinterpretation. The missionaries' construction of Buddhism caught on in Ceylon thanks in large part to the fact that Sinhalese readers could use it to defend Buddhism's integrity as a competing tradition. To describe this process whereby a literary form acquires a wide currency by being applied in several ways, we might turn to Levine's concept of affordances, which contends that it is in the very nature of forms to permit more than one reading (6–11). On one level, the form given to a set of materials can allow for various interpretations: casting Buddhism as an ethos of individualism could imply a kind of apolitical quietism as well as inspire oppositional politics. On a broader level, bestowing a common form on two different bodies of material may open up several comparativist narratives making sense of that likeness. If Buddhism resembled Protestantism, was this because it was its primitive ancestor? its providential preparation? its evolutionary superior? The power of the form lay in its ability to facilitate disagreement and dispute.

Going further, we might say that this moment of contentious appropriation is part of what transforms a form into a genre. For one way to understand a genre is as a form that has become linked for particular audiences to a certain set of rhetorical uses or occasions. Form and genre are often conflated as concepts, as Levine notes (13), but many accounts of genre recognize that it is fundamentally a function of how forms are deployed, not of forms as such.⁸ Where form can be defined in

the abstract, genre is a term that has meaning only in relation to the use of forms by literary actors in specific situations and contexts. The rhetorical theorist Anne Freadman, for instance, defines genre as a product of "uptake," or the process by which different audiences come to recognize a literary form and to incorporate it into their own discourses. The fact that uptakes may be contentious, for Freadman, means that genres often carry disagreement at their very heart. Freadman thus compares genre to a game in which one player serves up a form and then other players interpret, appropriate, or adapt it as they will; literary forms define the "rules" but not the "moves" of this game, establishing a conceptual arena within which social and cultural conflicts can be played out ("Anyone?" 44, 50; "Uptake").⁹

The virtue of thinking about Protestant Buddhism along these lines is that it gives Sinhalese readers a certain agency in interpreting and popularizing the missionary representations of Buddhism. It bears out Anne Blackburn's recent argument that Sinhalese audiences embraced Protestant Buddhism not because they had been duped by missionary ideology but rather because the form resonated with certain long-simmering developments within Ceylonese Buddhism.¹⁰ Yet there is something that this model does not so easily explain: the fact that the most influential adaptations of Protestant Buddhist form, both in England and Asia, were neither novels nor prose biographies but rather long poems. Despite the form's deep resemblance to the bildungsroman, one would be hard-pressed to find any Victorian novels about the Buddha's life; Victorian long poems on the subject, meanwhile, included Richard Phillips's *The Story of Gautama Buddha and His Creed* (1871); the American E. D. Root's *Sakya Buddha* (1880); Sidney Arthur Alexander's *Sakya-Muni* (Oxford's Newdigate Prize poem of 1887); Henry T. Niles's *The Dawn and the Day* (1894); and, the most successful of the

group, Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879). When Arnold first conceptualized his poem during his tenure at Pune, he little suspected that he was hatching one of the great literary blockbusters of the late nineteenth century. *The Light of Asia* would have a major impact on Mahatma Gandhi, T. S. Eliot, and other luminaries, ultimately selling over half a million copies and inspiring both theatrical and film adaptations (see Clausen 174; Clarke 88; Wright 74–85).¹¹ The poem was based substantially on the missionary digests and followed their construction of the Buddha's life as a sort of *Bildung* plot.¹² It consists primarily of a blank-verse narrative of Prince Gautama's spiritual education and ends with a quatrain sermon delivered by its newly enlightened protagonist; it also downplays the supernatural elements of his story, portraying a sort of self-help Buddha who preaches that "man hath no fate except past deeds, / No Hell but what he makes" (7.167–68; see Franklin 42). Perhaps most important, the poem gives special intensity to those elements of the Buddha's life that resonate with the classical bildungsroman's conflict between personal vocation and social duty. Stephen Collins has shown how the story of Siddhartha Gautama emerged from a line of South Asian narratives in which a royal heir is banished, lives in the forest as an ascetic, and eventually returns home in triumph (658–69). Arnold's poem transforms this contest between worldly and spiritual power into a distinctly novelistic struggle that pits Gautama's obligation to his family against his pursuit of a personal mission. On leaving his wife and children, for example, Gautama announces in a soliloquy:

For thee . . . I lay aside my youth,
My throne, my joys, my golden days, my
 nights,
My happy palace—and thine arms, sweet
 Queen!
Harder to put aside than all the rest!
Yet thee, too, I shall save, saving this earth . . .
(4.351–55)

This conflict is resolved at the end of the poem, when his son, Rahula, elects to enter his monastic order, vindicating his father's vocation by treating it as a patrimonial inheritance.

What we have here, effectively, is a mismatch between form and medium—between the novelistic arc of Protestant Buddhism and the blank-verse epic format in which many readers first encountered it.¹³ *Medium*, as I use the term, refers to the specific literary vehicles that move texts and their organizing forms around: whether readers encounter a text as a scroll or a codex, a book or a film, printed in end-stopped lines or in continuous prose. I pose the form-medium distinction heuristically because it allows us to get at two different dimensions of a literary text that relate in distinct ways to readerly agency.¹⁴ Where forms carry an often overt conceptual baggage that can be deliberately applied to different cases, media wield more subtle types of prestige that frame how people make sense of forms. To read literary history through form is to trace how readers adapt and modify abstract structures; to read literary history through medium is to reconstruct the implicit associations that a text's format commands in a given context. Freadman includes medium in the broader category of "ceremonials": "the publishing conventions that make books the way they are . . . with covers, titles, bibliographical and cataloguing information, title pages, tables of contents, acknowledgements . . . footnotes, indexes, glossaries," all of which, she argues, have the power to shape the uptake of literary forms ("Anyone?" 60).

In the case of *The Light of Asia*, the different kinds of prestige attached to epic verse across the British Empire played a crucial role in inflecting how various audiences took up that form. In Victorian Britain, declining sales of poetry tended to reinforce the old Enlightenment conceit that epic poetry was a relic of premodern culture.¹⁵ At the same time, Herbert Tucker has shown, it gave Victorian long poems an unusual combina-

tion of high "esteem value" and low "market value" that granted writers a certain freedom to dally with "culturally hazardous material" (12, 12, 410). Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859) in particular established a precedent of using book-length poems set in the mouths of foreign sages to explore philosophical materialism, religious skepticism, and other lines of thought that Victorian writers otherwise confronted at some risk (Yohannan 8–12). In FitzGerald's wake came a wave of what Tucker calls "eclectic" epics that positioned figures such as Lao Tzu and Mohammed as evolutionary steps on the road to civilization and Christianity (462–548). (By contrast, Jesus was a favorite subject of nineteenth-century fiction writers, the novel being a literary vehicle that suggested his essential modernity [Gatrall; Ledger-Lomas 181].) Together, this set of associations would have put a loaded frame around the comparative form that Arnold had borrowed, dignifying Buddhism while also implying that it was Christianity's less-developed precursor, a religion whose founder had anticipated moral truths that would find fulfillment only with the dawning of the Christian era (see Dentith 179–80; Graham 129–34).

Arnold would later make this claim explicitly in a follow-up entitled *The Light of the World* (1891), which presents Gautama and Jesus as two lights, the one merely local and the other shining out to all the globe. (The poem begins by suggesting that the Magi who attended Christ's birth were Indian Buddhists who had been waiting patiently for this greater light to appear.) But the idea also runs like a thread through *The Light of Asia* itself as Arnold builds a persistent tension between his modernizing hero and the various archaic flourishes of his verse. Book 8, which sees Prince Gautama return to his father's palace, opens with a vista of the palace grounds as they appear centuries later in ruins:

A broad mead spreads by swift Kohâna's bank
 At Nagara; five days shall bring a man
 In ox-wain thither from Benares' shrines
 Eastward and northward journeying. The
 horns
 Of white Himâla look upon the place,
 Which all the year is glad with blooms and
 girt
 By groves made green from that bright
 streamlet's wave.
 Soft are its slopes and cool its fragrant shades,
 And holy all the spirit of the spot
 Unto this time: the breath of eve comes hushed
 Over the tangled thickets, and high heaps
 Of carved red stones cloven by root and stem
 Of creeping fig, and clad with waving veil
 Of leaf and grass. The still snake glistens forth
 From crumbled work of lac and cedar-beams
 To coil his folds there on deep-graven slabs;
 The lizard dwells and darts o'er painted floors
 Where kings have paced; the grey fox litters
 safe
 Under the broken thrones; only the peaks,
 And stream, and sloping lawns, and gentle air
 Abide unchanged. All else, like all fair shows
 Of life, are fled—for this is where it stood,
 The city of Suddhâdana, the hill
 Whereon, upon an eve of gold and blue
 At sinking sun Lord Buddha set himself
 To teach the Law in hearing of his own.

(8.1–26)

These lines, seemingly designed to recall Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751), locate Arnold's Protestantized Buddha within a gothic topography of ruins in a way that casts him as being proleptic of modernity but not its direct competitor.¹⁶ This is a world in which static visual complexity has supplanted temporal change: "the still snake glistens forth," giving the appearance of motion while remaining "still," just as the sentence's main verb ("glistens forth") oddly confuses visual kinetics with locomotion. The other key verbs that populate these winding lines describe either imperceptibly slow processes or achieved states of visual entanglement. The thickets are "tangled," and the

red stones are "cloven by root and stem / Of creeping fig," "clad with saving veil / Of leaf and grass." In his recent study of the colonial bildungsroman, Jed Esty argues that coming-of-age novels set in developing states often use plots of stunted or delayed growth to dramatize the uneven paths of modernization (1–38). In Arnold's poem, antidevelopmental vistas like the one above invoke the trope of a static Orient so as to place his otherwise modernist Buddha at a certain historical remove, thus preparing us for the final irony that Arnold allows his Buddha to deliver his closing sermon in *Rubâiyât*-like quatrains. At the climax of a poem that has consistently portrayed Gautama as a Whiggish critic of institutionalized rites, Arnold suddenly shifts to that most ritualistic of verse forms, transforming his hero from an Indian Luther into another Omar Khayyâm, an ancient sage dispensing protomodern wisdom in the tidy oriental box of the four-line stanza.

Little wonder, then, that one American critic dismissed *The Light of Asia* as a piece of chintzy Tennysonian nostalgia, "a series of idylls of the Buddh [sic]" (Wilkinson 34; see Graham 140). To Sinhalese readers, however, Arnold's chosen format carried a very different set of resonances. Subhas Chandra Saha has shown how nineteenth-century Bengali writers revered British poetry as their main point of access to the imperial language. In much the same way, Arnold's vaguely neo-classical verse would likely have reminded English-speaking Sinhalese of the Pope and Johnson poems they had imitated in British missionary schools (Gooneratne, "Perspective" 1; Chitnis 32). At the same time, Arnold's verse would also have called up a considerably older association among poetry, Buddhism, and Sinhalese identity. Buddhist monks had served as the custodians of written Sinhalese for centuries, and among the various kinds of writing they curated, it was poetry specifically that became most closely associated with Sinhalese linguistic

and cultural purity. Ceylon formed part of what Sheldon Pollock has called the Sanskrit cosmopolis, a region of South Asia where Sanskrit rhetoric and poetics served as the normative model for vernacular literature (10–30). Sinhala was unique, however, in developing an internal division between a prose alphabet and a special alphabet for poetry, in which the latter (called *elu*) was especially resistant to borrowing foreign words. Thanks to *elu* poetics, in the courts of the fifteenth-century Kotte monarchs Sinhala came to wield its own religious and political capital (Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry* 13–15; Hallisey, “Works” 690–707). This incipiently nationalistic prestige attached to verse would prove extremely durable, even as the political landscape of Ceylon underwent radical changes. When the Kotte monarchy was dismantled by the Portuguese in 1597, the special status of verse did not disappear with it but rather shifted from a means of exercising power in a court setting to a way of “asserting moral excellence” (Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry* 216).

Together these divergent connotations attached to verse gave *The Light of Asia* an importantly contradictory feel to the Sinhalese. At once possessing obvious distinction in the new colonial system and stirring memories of an older literary nationalism, Arnold’s poem resonated with a movement that was asserting the autonomous dignity of Sinhalese Buddhism even as it capitalized on new forms of economic mobility enabled by British rule. Hence the way that it figures into the speeches and letters of Anagarika Dharmapala. Although Dharmapala frequently cited *The Light of Asia* in his speeches and letters, he rarely quoted anything but the poem’s opening invocation, often simply name-dropping the poem as a form of currency that Europeans would respect and South Asians revere. In a letter to the Right Honorable Bonar Law, secretary of state for the colonies, he eagerly mentions that the Buddha’s life “has been beautifully described

by the late Sir Edwin Arnold in his ‘Light of Asia’ and Sir Edwin in his book ‘East and West’ calls me ‘my excellent friend’” (721). In a newspaper essay entitled “Buddhism in Australia,” meanwhile, Dharmapala reminds the reader that “Sir Edwin Arnold’s ‘Light of Asia’ is of course well known, and has probably been more largely read than any other book devoted to Buddhism” (840). In both cases the implication is that the poem is important less for its contents than for its sheer existence. The same esteem is implicit in the prominent place that Dharmapala’s periodicals gave to canonical English poets whose words could be enlisted into the revival’s cause. His journal *The Buddhist* typically placed a poetic epigram at the top of its first page—sometimes from *The Light of Asia* but just as often from figures such as Swift, Pope, Thomson, or Keble. Alexander Pope’s neo-classical dicta on balance and moderation, for example, frequently appeared as injunctions to rational self-cultivation. “Two Principles in human nature reign; / Self-love to urge, and Reason to restrain,” the epigrammed Pope told readers of volume 4, number 6 (1892) in the section “Poetical Extracts,” while the same section in volume 3, number 31 (1891), featured lines from his juvenilia extolling the pleasures of “sound sleep by night; study and ease, / Together mix’d; sweet recreation, / And innocence which most does please / With meditation” (fig. 1). But *The Buddhist* had a special liking for poets who articulated the movement’s radical dissent against Christian civilization. Volume 2, number 1 (1889) featured a speech by Lucifer from Byron’s *Cain* in which the fallen archangel enjoins readers to cultivate “an inner world / In your own bosom – where the outward fails; / So shall you nearer be the spiritual / Nature, and war triumphant with your own” (“Lord Byron”). In his autobiography, Dharmapala recalled reading Shelley’s works at the Pettah Library next to his father’s business and savoring the poet’s “lyric indignation against the tyrannies

THE BUDDHIST.

Namo Tassa Bhagawato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa.

Praise be to Him who is the Blessed, the Holy One, Perfect in wisdom and understanding.

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POETICAL EXTRACTS.

Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound;
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with
bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years, slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mix'd; sweet recreation,
And innocence which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie. *

POPE

THE ADYAR CONVENTION LECTURES.

"THEOSOPHY IN THE WEST."
(Continued).

The next thing they did was to re-arrange, with his brother's help, the manuscript according to the scheme, and then they had the whole thing type-written out. They next proceeded to investigate it and found that the matter was in a very confused condition, because, when she started to write notes on some subjects, she would write an actual commentary on some matter connected with science, and go off into

a long note on it, and at last having completed the thread of discourse, plunge back into stanzas without any connection with what had preceded. They made three divisions of the Stanzas and their Commentary, the Symbolism and Science. This involved great work in the re-arrangement of the matter. Of commentary on the Stanzas, there were about 25 pages to each volume. The result of all this process was a manuscript and type-writing such as no compositor could make out, owing to the lines here, there, down the corner, along and around. He said all this, as there had been very many complaints of want of coherence and arrangement. The last stage—the preparation for the press—was not completed till nearly a year and three months after he first started in the work, that is to say, in June 1888. It was a long way from Macao to London and also inconvenient to attend their meetings; so they resided at 17, Lansdowne Road, having moved to it at the close of October 1889. At that time the Blavatsky Lodge had undertaken the publication of the *Lucifer* journal. That meant a good deal of work, and as people used to call in largely during the day time they were compelled to adopt a rule that Madame Blavatsky would receive visitors only in the evenings and not in the day time. *Lucifer* attracted attention; they had a number of discussions on various theosophical topics, which lasted for some weeks; the number of members increased till they found it necessary to establish a class of associated members, that is to say, persons who were sufficiently interested in the subjects under discussion, and wished to attend the meetings of the Lodge

FIG. 1

Front page of
Dharmapala's *The
Buddhist* for 24 July
1891, featuring a
complete reprint-
ing of Alexander
Pope's "Ode on
Solitude" (1700).

* It is not generally known perhaps that this is a very early production of our Author, written at about twelve years old. [Ed.—B.]

and injustices that man heaps on himself, and [his] passion for individual freedom" (686). Here a new middle-class reader takes up another of the great English radical poets and channels his combination of metropolitan cachet and passionate apostasy toward ends that Shelley himself would never have imagined.

[III]

Perhaps the best reason to distinguish between form and medium in this manner is that it allows us to bring together a number of diverging perspectives in transnational literary studies. For one thing, it offers a more nuanced take on the old question of subaltern readerly agency. First-wave postcolonial criticism famously demonstrated the power of metropolitan discourse to infiltrate the categories in which subject peoples attempt to talk back to empire. Since that time a standard critique of such work has been that it hands too much authority to the very colonizers it seeks to undermine.¹⁷ Approaching global literary history through a distinction between literary forms that readers can deliberately repurpose and concrete media that load forms with silent but persuasive prestige, however, enables us to do justice to both realities.¹⁸ It lets us recognize how Sinhalese Buddhists could rework the ethical and intellectual implications of Protestant Buddhism while also acknowledging the extent to which that move was predicated on the cachet of English books and English verse. These two facts become complementary rather than contradictory.

More broadly, grounding such problems of agency in a form-medium distinction offers a way to integrate rival visions of transnational literary method. In many respects what distinguishes recent transnational studies such as Isabel Hofmeyr's *The Portable Bunyan* (2004) from their postcolonial precursors is that they anchor their approaches in more granular objects of analysis. Where classical postcolonial theory spoke of discourses and

dialectics, critics like Hofmeyr have used the microcosms of individual texts and their receptions to grasp the complex dynamics of global literary culture. This split, in turn, bespeaks a larger divide that has come to characterize literary criticism, as many scholars have turned away from the metaphysical keywords of high theory and toward seemingly more concrete sites of engagement: bodies, objects, printed commodities. Should we tackle literary history through theoretical abstractions or through empirical analysis? Do we locate agency in invisible ideological fields or in the work of particular texts, writers, and publishers? Reading for the friction between politically loaded literary forms and the concrete media that facilitate their reception, however, permits us to combine, without ever collapsing, the conceptual power of classical ideology critique with the empiricism of media studies and book history. Indeed, this is why the term *genre* holds such promise for transnational criticism: it requires that we look at both simultaneously. Genre, as defined by Freadman, represents a site where forms and media intersect—where the politically fraught dissemination and reinvention of literary forms becomes grounded in specific contexts of reception.

By way of closing, I would like to suggest why the particular convergence of form and medium that I have been tracing—Protestant Buddhism and the Victorian long poem—ultimately came apart. Among Western writers, verse became less and less useful for hedging one's enthusiasm for Protestant Buddhism. As admiring portraits of Buddhism grew increasingly mainstream in the United Kingdom and the United States, there was less need to temper the image of Gautama as a modernizing reformer with the archaizing connotations of Tennysonian verse. Thus, even as poetry continued to be the conventional medium for literary treatments of Buddhism, writers seemed more ambivalent as to why they were using it. Take, for instance, Root's *Sakya Buddha*, which appeared a year

after *The Light of Asia* and offered an even more glowing portrait of Gautama as a heroic religious reformer. Professing himself “deep-roused by true missionary zeal” (vii), Root goes further than Arnold in assimilating the Buddha to the ideals of liberal Protestantism by eliminating Gautama’s enlightenment as a discrete event and instead having him preach a long series of discourses on subjects ranging from the vices of priestcraft to temperance: “He banned the use of drinking / Of Soma e’en a draught; / Alleged that clearly thinking / To Heaven would incense waft” (4.111–14). For this reason, however, Root tends to waffle in his rationale for using verse, describing it sometimes as sugar for the medicine but at other times as an encumbrance on his poem’s spiritual message. In his preface, for example, Root explains that he has opted to compose in a catchy four-beat stanza so as to make his difficult subject more approachable: because the works of Hardy and Rhys Davids are “beyond the reach of the mass of readers,” he has “epitomized, and brought within the scope of the masses (to whom those volumes are inaccessible) all that is needed to form a correct biographical narrative” of Gautama (vi). Elsewhere, however, Root invokes verse not, like Sir Philip Sidney, as the sweetness that makes difficult knowledge pleasing, but rather as a constricting convention that stifles the rude, authentic ring of truth. Thus he assures his readers up front that he has used “copious annotations to render plain many incidents interwoven with the career of Buddha which could not have been easily wrought in r[h]ythmic numbers” (vi). Where Arnold had achieved a certain estranging effect by packing his lines with unexplained Pali and Sanskrit terminology (see Clausen 175), Root fills the second half of his volume with annotations that attempt to explicate his Buddha’s philosophy as clearly as possible. For Root, verse is merely a musical gambit to draw readers in, the hope being that they will come for the poetry and stay for the endnotes.

It is tempting to read Root’s vexed attitude toward verse as the product of America’s more radical dissenting culture. But one finds the same ambivalence in another British poem, Alexander’s *Sakya-Muni: The Story of Buddha*. Although less overtly pro-Buddhist than Root, Alexander too is drawn toward the image of Gautama as a self-cultivated individualist and similarly treats verse as a kind of mythological trapping from which Gautama needs to be liberated. In his preface, Alexander announces that “since it is impossible on the one hand to accept all or many of the mythical stories told of Sakya-muni,” he will omit many of the canonical narrative episodes that Arnold adapted and focus instead on “the two great crises of Buddha’s life—the Great Renunciation and the Enlightenment beneath the Boh-tree” (n. pag.). In this spirit, his invocation updates *Paradise Lost*’s question of how high a modern epic can fly by inverting what high and low mean altogether:

Buddha, ’tis hard for one thus later-born
To sing of thee and tell thy life aright;
So rich the hues wherewith, all misty-bright
Old legends and quaint tales of Indian lore
Have decked thy deeds till larger than before
They loom like shadows on the Brocken hill.
Thus too thou has been traced by poet’s skill
In dainty pages delicately wrought
With rainbow colours from the skies of
thought.

Ours may it be, unwinged for flight so high,
To pierce the mists and there thyself descry,
Living like us a life of deep unrest,
Weak, conquering, conquered, struggling to
be blest. (76–88)

While Alexander here is ostensibly professing his unworthiness to match Arnold’s poetic accomplishment, his real suggestion is that the highest bardic flight would manage to “pierce these mists” of poetic mythology altogether and find the moral human being beyond, “[l]iving like us a life of deep unrest, / Weak, conquering, conquered, struggling to

be blest.” Likewise, in describing Gautama’s temptation by the demon Mara, Alexander transforms the kind of supernatural confrontation that one might find in Milton (“Shapes such as he alone could rightly tell / Who sang of Paradise ’twixt Heaven and Hell, / And loathly sinful things, ghastly and grim”) into the very thing that Gautama must overcome if he is to attain moral maturity (289–91). In Root’s poem, the desire to save Gautama from too much poetry resulted in a split between musical verse and didactic endnotes; in *Sakya-Muni*, it sees Alexander eliminate most of the narrative episodes that Arnold used and focus almost exclusively on psychology. The result is a fifteen-page poem less *Paradise Lost* than “Lycidas”: a prospective flight that never quite attains the great end it prophesies.

What Root and Alexander preview, in effect, is the extent to which changing attitudes toward Buddhism in Anglo-American popular culture would ultimately decouple Protestant Buddhism from poetry. In England and the United States, writers increasingly valorized Buddhism as an exemplary model of modernized religion by eschewing the high-culture sanction of verse for that characteristic literary format of evangelical modernity, the self-help manual, which translated Buddhist doctrines into a guide for everyday life. This is perhaps the main reason that Arnold’s *Light of Asia* is largely forgotten among Western audiences today, even as the construction of Buddhism that it popularized endures. In Buddhist countries, by contrast, *The Light of Asia* continued to accrue popularity among reformers who, thanks to the efforts of Dharmapala, more and more operated as a network stretching from Ceylon to Japan (see Jaffe)—hence the various vernacular translations of the poem that proliferated during the early decades of the new century. Nevertheless, events on the ground eventually conspired to obviate verse as the preferred medium for Protestant Buddhism in Asia too. In the wake of

the national independence movements of the 1940s and 1950s, regionalist politics gradually eclipsed anti-imperialist ones. Sinhalese translations of the poem, for example, would have been aimed not just at the Queen’s English but also at Tamil, which after 1948 was competing with Sinhala for dominance in a newly independent Ceylon. More generally, what one sees in Sinhalese Buddhism of the mid-twentieth century is a turn away from a politics of voice that focused on repurposing colonial print media and toward a territorialist politics centered on holy sites and mass-media spectacles. Land supplanted language as the key setting for Buddhist nationalism, and ruins and relics found their way into a new nationalist iconography as settings for public pilgrimages in which politicians make offerings before the TV cameras (Berkwitz, “Buddhism” 51–53).

Yet here too, ironically, *The Light of Asia* played a role. For it was Arnold himself who encouraged the turn toward territorial politics by parlaying his poem’s orientalist fascination with exotic ruins into a sustained concern with the fate of Buddhist sites in modern South Asia. During his 1885 visit to the subcontinent, he stopped by Bodh Gaya, the site of the Bodhi tree under which Gautama had found enlightenment, and was shocked to discover the old Buddhist temple there languishing under Hindu care. Pulling some leaves from the tree, he inscribed them with a Sanskrit verse and brought them to the Buddhist monks at Vidyodaya, imploring them to reclaim the site (Wright 114–19). Thus began a campaign that Arnold continued to wage from England and that, in 1891, inspired Dharmapala to found the Maha Bodhi Society with the goal of “restoring this Buddhist Jerusalem into Buddhist hands” (330; see Kinnard). Although these ambitions would not be realized until the 1950s, Arnold’s role in sparking the campaign was memorialized in one of the early classics of Indian silent cinema, Franz Osten’s Indian-



FIG. 2

A still from *The Light of Asia* (1925).

German coproduction *The Light of Asia* (1925). The film, a collaboration between the Indian entrepreneur Himansu Rai and the German Emelka studio, follows the poem's major plot points as well as its central conflict between familial affection and religious vocation (fig. 2); its Hindi title, *Prem Sanyas*, roughly translates as "love and asceticism" (Bakker 136). But the film also takes up the poem's fixation with ruins, opening on a panoramic montage of famous Indian religious sites like the Jama Mosque in Delhi and then cutting to a scene of Europeans touring the ruined Bodh Gaya, where an ascetic begins to narrate the saga of Gautama (137). The film uses the trope of ruins, in other words, not to archaize Buddhism but rather to ennoble it as one of the great religions of the world. Rai and Osten's *Light of Asia* was not the first South Asian film about the Buddha—that, as far as we know, was Dada Saheb Phalke's now lost *Buddhadev* (1923) (see Bakker 136). What it did do, however, was use the new medium of cinema and the contested topography of Bodh Gaya to locate its Buddha squarely in the religious and territorial politics of a new Indian modernity.

NOTES

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1. Both *Protestant Buddhism* and *Buddhist modernism* are used by scholars to describe forms of Buddhism that have been reshaped by imperatives such as scripturalization, de-ritualization, and laicization. For foundational accounts, see Bechert; Bond; Gombrich and Obeyesekere; Obeyesekere; Malalgoda. For more recent overviews, see McMahan 3–25; Seneviratne 1–24; Blackburn, *Locations* 197–201.

2. For critiques of form as a homogenizing force in comparative literature, see Duff 1–16. For parallel debates about the category of religion, see Asad 27–54; Masuzawa; McCutcheon. For a related treatment of the overlaps among concepts of *world religions*, *world literature*, and *genre*, see Dimock 23–51, 73–106.

3. See Veidlinger for a more detailed study of Theravada Buddhist manuscript culture.

4. Leighton regards the modern concept of literary form as being split between an abstract sense ("an abstraction from matter, removed and immaterial") and an embodied sense (the specific "shape or body of something") (1). She aligns the first definition with classical aesthetics from Plato to Schiller and regards the second as a Victorian development (1–28).

5. For instance, see recent studies of the bildungsroman as a form that has played a crucial role in exporting forms of liberal individualism beyond the West (Esty; Slaughter; Boes).

6. See Gooneratne, *English Literature* 29–30 for sample book lists from Colombo Academy and Trinity College in the late 1860s. For a discussion of everyday patterns of English usage among the Sinhalese clerkly classes, consult Fernando.

7. Young and Somaratna offer a comprehensive overview of the debates.

8. As Levine puts it, *form* is a term that describes collections of fairly "stable" empirical features (13), whereas *genre* connotes formal features that have become tied to certain uses, conventions, or occasions by specific audiences: "Forms are organizations or arrangements that afford repetition and portability across materials and contexts"; genres are "customary constellations of elements [in] historically recognizable groupings of artistic objects" (14). For similar accounts of genre, see Cohen; Altman 1–12.

9. For other key rhetorical-theory treatments of genre, see Devitt; Miller; Russell.

10. Blackburn argues that Protestant Buddhism resonated with the rise of the *sutra sannaya* commentaries, which in the eighteenth century began to shift the emphasis of monastic practice toward scriptural hermeneutics (*Buddhist Learning* 197–203).

11. Because of the prevalence of pirated versions, we cannot say how many copies of *The Light of Asia* were eventually sold in America, but Wright, through a comparison with contemporaneous best sellers such as *Ben Hur* (1880) and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886), puts the figure at somewhere between a half a million and a million (74–75).

12. Clausen reckons Arnold's main sources to have included Beal's *Romantic Legend of Sakya-Buddha* (1875), Hardy's *Manual*, Captain T. Rogers's translation *Buddhaghosha's Parables* (1870), and Rhys Davids's *Buddhism* (176–77).

13. This gap is not just a retrospective projection of Bakhtin's novel-epic distinction but would have been striking in the Victorian context too: as Tucker notes, very few Victorian long poems featured plots of individual development, preferring instead to focus on national or civilizational stories (490).

14. Luhmann 102–32 presents an alternative formulation of this distinction.

15. On the geopolitical connotations of epic poetry in the nineteenth century—particularly its associations with nation and empire—see Dentith; Graham.

16. For romantic ruins as a motif in Victorian Anglo-Indian poetry, see Gibson 82–91.

17. For an overview of this critique in literary studies, see Parry. In Buddhist studies, meanwhile, Hallisey, Blackburn, and Berkwitz have all criticized Obeyesekere's Protestant Buddhism thesis for giving British colonialism primary agency in the reshaping of Theravada Buddhism over the second half of the nineteenth century (Hallisey, "Roads"; Blackburn, *Locations* 197–201; Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry* 5–7).

18. Moretti seeks to accomplish similar ends with his three-way distinction among form, materials, and voice: metropolitan literary forms, the colonial materials to which they are applied, and the specific authorial voices tasked with fitting the two together (65).

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Indigenous Agency and Compliance: Contemporary Literature about Dayaks

TIFFANY TSAO

ON 24 AUGUST 1991, A NEWSPAPER IN THE INDONESIAN PROVINCE of East Kalimantan published an opinion piece with the sensational headline “Human Beings Living Stone Age–Style Found in East Kalimantan” ‘Kalimantan Timur, Masih Ditemukan Manusia Hidup Ala Zaman Batu.’ Written in response to the discovery of a cave-dwelling community of Basaps—one of Kalimantan’s many groups of indigenous people who are collectively referred to as Dayaks—its tone was at once sympathetic and condescending. The author, Bernabas Sebilang, described the community as “primitive human beings . . . in stone caves, practically naked” ‘manusia primitif hidup dalam goa-goa batu, nyaris tidak berbusana’ and condemned the unequal economic and social development in the province that had permitted such communities to remain so “isolated” ‘terasing’ and “backward” ‘terbelakang.’ Observing indignantly how “in this era of independence, there are primitive Indonesians who yet live as if we were in the Stone Age” ‘toh masih ada saja manusia Indonesia primitif hidup seperti zaman batu di alam kemerdekaan ini,’ he made several suggestions for their betterment, including the public exhibition of their dances and rituals to capitalize on civilized people’s fascination with things “primitive, traditional, and untouched by the process of modernization” ‘primitif, tradisional, yang belum terkena proses modernisasi.’

The piece is a good example of the kind of discourse about Dayaks that has prevailed in Indonesia for a very long time. Like other indigenous groups, who have been widely perceived by Indonesian society as backward, Dayaks historically resided in isolated and inaccessible areas, away from the coastal centers of political authority and interregional economic trade. They practice swidden agriculture (also known as shifting cultivation, or more pejoratively, slash-

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and-burn agriculture) and have a reputation for savagery and violence: past practices of taking enemies' heads among some Dayak groups gave rise to the impression of Dayaks as fearsome headhunters, cannibals even. Among the predominantly Muslim population of Kalimantan, traditional Dayak culture also carries associations with heathenism and black magic—to the point that Dayaks who converted to Islam often changed their ethnic affiliation to Malay (King 130). Even today, some Muslims perceive the religious differences between themselves and Dayaks as the distinction between a knowledge “rational, cosmopolitan, and civilized” and a knowledge “dangerously indigenous . . . pressed back to the untamed margins of civilization” (Tsing, *In the Realm* 182).

The negative stereotypes continued through the twentieth century. The nationalist period in Indonesia saw the ascendance of a narrative that framed the evolution of the modern nation as a triumphant subsumption of local, regional affiliations—the turning of an immense population spread across thousands of islands and fractured by ethnolinguistic and religious differences into a single “spectacular butterfly called ‘Indonesian’” (Anderson 123). The transformation, however, depended on the downplaying of ethnicity, which up to that point had formed one of the main foundations for groups' identities. The distinctive languages and customs of each group were now regarded, the Sundanese writer Ajip Rosidi recalls, as “static, stationary, backward, not in step with the times” ‘beku, macet, terbelakang, tak sesuai dengan zaman’ (95). Although the association of ethnic affiliation with backwardness decreased for many groups during the Suharto regime (especially for the Javanese, whose cultural norms formed the basis for national norms during this period), Dayaks and many other indigenous peoples continued to be labeled by the government and wider society as disorderly, backward, isolated, and in need of mod-

ernization (Pemberton). Until the 1990s, their agricultural practices were deemed not only inefficient and crude but also extremely destructive to the natural environment (Schiller 79; Bertrand 54; Tsing, *In the Realm* 155).

Bernabas Sebilang's opinion piece certainly does not list all the negative qualities associated with Dayaks; but in using a good portion of them to argue for the improvement of the condition of such peoples in the province, he demonstrates his complicity with a system that supports and perpetuates prejudice against Dayaks. Or does he?

A key piece of information about the author's identity may make all the difference: Bernabas Sebilang was not only Dayak himself but also a staunch advocate for Dayak cultural and political rights. He served as head of the Foundation for the Development of the Interior during the Suharto period. And he continued to champion those rights in the post-Suharto period once restrictions on ethnicity-based politics were removed. His Dayak identity and advocacy suggest a different relation between the indigenous subject and the essentializing discourse about it. Discourse that has legitimacy and authority can influence those in power. The parroting of familiar words (“backward,” “isolated,” “primitive”) can coax economic benefits from the government and argue for public acceptance of indigenous cultural practices. If discourse can be used to oppress, Bernabas Sebilang's article suggests that it can also impart power to the oppressed who use its terms to their own advantage.

It has not been uncommon for Dayaks to use dominant, seemingly anti-Dayak discourse to negotiate better positions for themselves in a society that has consistently perceived them as other. One might even argue that otherness has become fundamental to contemporary Dayak ethnic identity. *Dayak* was originally a blanket term applied to all people who lived in the interior and maintained their customs and religions.

Until late in the twentieth century, the term was rejected by Dayaks themselves as derogatory and too general—one identified as a Benuaq, a Kenyah, a Lun Dayeh, not a Dayak. But in the past few decades, the concept of a shared Dayakness has shed its negative connotations; pan-Dayak organizations have sprung up, mobilizing to unite the over 250 Dayak subgroups of Kalimantan in the name of achieving greater cultural and political influence (Schiller). Accounts by anthropologists and sociologists offer evidence of Dayaks' aligning themselves strategically with negative stereotypes. During the clashes that broke out between Dayaks and Madurese in West Kalimantan Province in 1997, many Dayaks adopted and even internalized the persona of headhunter to intimidate their enemies (Peluso and Harwell; Dove). Tsing writes of how leaders of Meratus Dayak communities have exploited impressions of Dayaks as uneducated, indigent, and isolated to obtain resources and assistance from the government ("Becoming").

Before, Dayaks who chose to utilize rather than contest the dominant discourse about them had only negative stereotypes to work with. Now, two forms of discourse more flattering to Dayaks seem to obviate the need for them to resort to such cunning, giving them more promising material to work with. The first has evolved out of conventions for portraying traditional ethnic culture in literature, which were established when local-color fiction as a genre made its debut on the national literary scene in the late 1970s. Local-color works turned their attention to the customs and lifestyles of ethnic communities in Indonesia's rural areas, which they aligned with a valuable, though premodern, past. The second form of discourse originated in the environmental conservation movement in North America and made its way to Indonesia as it did throughout the rest of the world. This discourse casts indigenous peoples, such as the Dayaks, as wise stewards of nature who

possess unique and important knowledge about their surroundings. Like works in the local-color genre, it tends to portray Dayaks as premodern and often antimodern.

At first glance, these new discourses point to an improvement of attitude toward Dayaks, but three recent literary works from East Kalimantan that incorporate them suggest otherwise. "Dulak," by Herman A. Salam, and "Patriskiting," by Waliyunu Heriman, are respectful and well-meaning attempts by non-Dayaks to portray the lifestyles and outlooks of their Dayak characters as distinctive from and in many ways superior to those of urban dwellers. In both stories, Dayaks are mindful of nature's well-being and knowledgeable of nature's workings. *Api Awan Asap* ("Fire Clouds Smoke") by Korrie Layun Rampan, a Benuaq Dayak author, offers more of the same. The novel is set in a traditional Benuaq community committed to maintaining its traditions even as it engages in economic and educational exchange with the nearby cities and towns. *Api Awan Asap* depicts numerous Benuaq agricultural practices and activities as ecologically mindful.

Yet despite their positive attributes, the Dayaks of these works live in a world in which they must comply with society's dominant discourse: they are either the passive or unwilling recipients of constructed identities, or they assume the identities voluntarily. "Dulak" and "Patriskiting" are about the application of what is considered good by non-Dayaks to Dayaks without the Dayaks' participation. *Api Awan Asap* is about Dayaks who conform to the constructions of them, reproducing in fiction what Korrie Layun Rampan does through the act of writing the work. All three works ruminate on Dayak agency in relation to discourse, suggesting that any empowerment the new discourses have to offer depends solely on the ability of the Dayaks to make use of them. In the absence of Dayak agency, the new discourses lead to a nostalgic primitivism in which the modern world con-

siders the errors it has made and the Dayaks themselves become obsolete. *Api Awan Asap* proposes a solution: strategic deference—the kind exhibited in Bernabas Sebilang’s article—may provide a means of surviving and flourishing in an otherwise hostile world.

Content, these three texts warn, does not matter as much as agency. That is, what is said about Dayaks does not matter as much as who is saying it. The most flattering essentialisms from the most well-intentioned on behalf of Dayaks may, in the absence of Dayak agency, prove as detrimental to Dayak interests as the ugliest stereotypes. But the particular form of agency that *Api Awan Asap* proposes can be fully understood and appreciated only with the help of the contextualization provided by anthropological and sociological texts. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s accounts of Meratus Dayak communities in South Kalimantan are particularly useful in this respect, showing how the Meratus use “a rhetoric of total deference to state authority” in order to safeguard their freedom in a system that would otherwise deny them independence, even existence. Compliance carves out spaces, moments where life untouched by state authority can continue: for “as long as the officers go back to their posts . . . then, perhaps, the flexible, mobile ‘disorder’ of everyday life and social relations can be provided another growing season. The continuing existence of Meratus settlement suggests that this logic of compliance has indeed had its moments of success” (*In the Realm* 96). Elsewhere, Tsing elaborates on the ability of certain Meratus leaders of one community to conform not only to state authorities’ expectations of obedient, willing subjects but also to conservationists’ and development administrators’ fantasies about environmentally mindful aborigines and backward, poverty-stricken villagers. It takes an “enormously complex skill to reproduce the dominant stereotypes so beautifully that they only see their imagined Other,” she observes (“Becoming” 181). It is primarily by

submitting themselves to be the other’s other that the Meratus Dayaks find their agency.

Tsing’s work provides a perspective on agency that is very different from that of theoretical discussions foundational to post-colonial studies about agency, dominant discourse, and the oppressed subject, which place great importance on resistance, subversion, and counterdiscourse, even as they have disagreed about how these strategies should be enacted. For example, one of the main aims of the Subaltern Studies Group has been to uncover instances of subaltern resistance that lie beyond the scope of hegemonic modes of documenting and narrativizing history. Deference by the oppressed to discursive constructions of the oppressed is usually equated with complicity or subjugation. When Edward Said speaks in *Orientalism* of “Orientals” mindlessly consuming images of the Orient produced by mass media and repeating “Orientalist dogmas,” he regards such acceptance as pitiable and the source of further subjugation (324–25). Homi Bhabha’s theorization of mimicry and hybridity perhaps comes closest to the kind of deference that Tsing records, but it differs in a crucial way: Bhabha’s mimic men and hybrid colonial subjects are subversive, sowing the seeds of destruction in colonial discourse by aping those in power. But the Meratus Dayaks whom Tsing describes are not subversive intentionally or unintentionally; instead, they lower themselves into the roles that those in power have constructed for them.

In this essay, I focus not on subversion but on compliance, to show that Dayak agency is located not in resisting discourse or even undermining it but in submitting to it, and submitting with an unsettling thoroughness. For Christopher Miller in *Theories of Africans*, consulting anthropological texts makes possible an understanding of francophone African texts that is much deeper than would be possible solely under the guiding lights of Western theory. In a similar way, Tsing’s observations

about submission as agency among the Mera-tus Dayaks bring into focus the power shift that *Api Awan Asap* maintains is possible when the Dayaks construct themselves according to people's constructions of them.

"Dulak," "Patriskiting," and *Api Awan Asap* are products of a recent boom in East Kalimantan representations of Dayaks that coincided roughly with the end of the New Order regime in 1998. The novel, which was awarded the Jakarta Arts Council prize in 1998 and published in 1999, was Korrie Layun Rampan's second about Dayak life; the first was *Upacara* ("Ritual"), which won the Jakarta Arts Council prize in 1976. *Api Awan Asap* preceded by a few years a wave of literary representations of Dayaks by East Kalimantan writers. The political, economic, and cultural decentralization that accompanied the onset of the post-Suharto Reformasi ("Reform") period led also to the dispersal of literary production beyond the capital, Jakarta, and across the provinces.

In East Kalimantan, literary production reached an all-time high. Provincial government support, monetary and moral, for the literary arts increased dramatically. Korrie Layun Rampan returned from Jakarta to his home province, where he began organizing writers' events and sponsoring the publication of anthologies of East Kalimantan writing. Local newspapers, magazines, and newly established publishing houses began providing venues for writers of the province. A literary scene began to develop, a body of works that considered itself representative of East Kalimantan grew, and writers were encouraged to deal directly with local subject matter.

When I visited the province in 2013, many of the writers I spoke with expressed their support for the inclusion of the local in writing, seeing it as a way to secure East Kalimantan's place on the national and international literary scene and introduce readers to the true cultural diversity of their country. "Indonesia isn't just Java, or Borobudur,

or Mount Bromo, or the Monas in Jakarta . . . there is also Derawan . . . Maratua and Sangalaki," observed Syafruddin Pernyata, a poet, essayist, and fiction writer, naming some of East Kalimantan's landmark sites. "In my opinion, writers have a sort of nascent duty to tell people about them" "Indonesia itu bukan hanya Jawa, bukan hanya Borobudur, bukan hanya Bromo, bukan hanya Monas di Jakarta . . . ada Derawan, ada Maratua, ada Sangalaki. . . . Menurut saya pengarang itu punya semacam kewajiban masih muda untuk memperkenalkan itu."¹ Even Shantined and Novieta Christina, for whom writing locally themed subject matter does not come naturally, said that they felt it was their duty, when contributing to collections of East Kalimantan writing, to incorporate at least some provincial elements in their work.

In this new climate of provincial patriotism, Dayaks are attractive subject matter, because they allow writers to show off one of the most distinctive aspects of the region to the outside readers they hope to reach and to provide insight into a segment of the local population that the inside readers they do reach know little about. Dayaks make up only six percent of the province's inhabitants, and many of them live outside the major cities and towns. The new literary works featuring Dayaks are written primarily for a non-Dayak readership, and most of them are by non-Dayaks, with the exception of Korrie Layun Rampan and, more recently, Elisaputra Lawa, who is also Benuaq Dayak.²

Most non-Dayak writers who made the decision to feature Dayaks in their works have done so with great caution, and as long as these portrayals are respectful and accurate, they are not perceived as problematic. Inni Indarpuri based her portrayal of a Dayak community in *Di Antara Dua Cinta* ("Between Two Loves") partly on her experiences while staying in such a community, and she sought advice and approval for the manuscript from Korrie Layun Rampan, who served as a men-

tor for many writers in the province up until his death in November 2015. Waliyunu Heriman, though originally from Java, wrote “Patriskiting” using the knowledge he gained as a journalist in Malinau (which, until the creation of North Kalimantan in October 2012, was part of East Kalimantan). Herman A. Salam is of Kutai descent but has interacted enough with Dayak people and communities that he feels not only confident writing about them but also compelled to do so in order to dispel the many misconceptions about Dayaks that people have: “that Dayaks like war, that Dayaks eat people, that Dayaks like to behead their enemies” ‘bahwa Dayak suka perang, Dayak itu makan orang, orang Dayak itu suka memenggal leher musuhnya.’ His acute sensitivity to the misrepresentation of Dayaks showed itself in the early 2000s, when he called for a new edition of a locally published collection containing three stories that had factual inaccuracies and implied that Dayaks were violent and closed-minded. The inner cover of the collection bore an illustration of a man about to be beheaded by a group of Dayaks.³ Herman A. Salam’s opinion that Dayaks “are the most gentle people in Indonesia” ‘Orang Dayak itu adalah manusia paling lembut di Indonesia ini’ and that in general they are “very mindful about environmental conservation” ‘orang Dayak itu sangat menjaga kelestarian alam’ suggests that although the new notions about Dayaks are positive, they tend to essentialize.

Many recent literary works featuring Dayaks show the influence of certain conventions in the treatment of ethnicity in Indonesian literature—conventions that were established with the emergence of local color as a genre in the late 1970s and early 1980s. What made local color (“warna lokal” or, as it was also called, “regional color” ‘warna daerah’) special then was its treatment of regional or ethnic subject matter using Indonesian (the language associated with modernity), Western art forms (also associated

with modernity), and a style indicating that each author was approaching this material self-consciously and “almost as an outsider” (Foulcher 1). Up to this point, the regional had been either the purview of “regional literature” ‘sastra daerah’—literature written in languages and using forms associated with specific ethnic cultures—or an unconscious element in modern Indonesian fiction (1–2). In contrast, works in the new genre purposely set out to detail traditional ethnic culture in all its particularity, setting themselves in small rural communities.

The local-color genre arose out of respect for the regional, the sense that it was worth representation on the national literary stage. But in the context of Indonesia’s nationalist narrative, the disjunction between the genre’s linguistic and formal medium and its subject matter took on the dimension of time: local-color writing was not just about depicting ethnic diversity or life in the countryside; it was also about rendering the past from a modern perspective, chronicling the outdated regional from the vantage point of a modern national sensibility.

Even when authors of local color were writing on the basis of personal familiarity with such ways of life, they were also educated Indonesian-speaking people who had moved to the city to pursue a career in writing. If they wrote as if their subject matter belonged to the past, it was partly because it belonged to their past, their childhood. And since the readers of modern Indonesian novels were fluent in Indonesian, cosmopolitan, and urban, they regarded local-color fiction as a window into a world from another era, pre-Indonesian and premodern. When Yakob Sumarjo, a literary critic, wrote enthusiastically in 1979 of the new genre, commenting on the originality of novels “not set in Indonesia’s cities but in the villages, among one of the many ethnic groups” ‘yang tidak bermain di kota-kota Indonesia, tetapi di desa-desanya, di kalangan masyarakat suku yang banyak itu,’ his review

showed the extent to which the new generation of readers considered metropolitan subject matter to be the norm (“Warna Daerah” [*Pikiran Rakyat*]). Local-color works were also termed anthropological and ethnographic, first by reviewers, then in the subtitles of the novels themselves, hinting at the exotic, even primitive, nature of their content (Yakob Sumarjo, “Warna Daerah” [*Segi Sosiologis*] 68; Pamusuk Eneste 188; Ariel Heryanto 254).⁴

In linking the regional with the past, Indonesian local-color works also foregrounded the genre’s difference from and opposition to the modern. Katrin Bandel, a critic, identifies as one of the hallmarks of local-color fiction its focus on conflict between tradition and modernity, in which tradition can become “an obstacle to progress” ‘penghalang kemajuan’ (131). In a typical work, an ethnic community finds itself unsettled or even threatened by outsiders and national events. Just as in America, where the local-color works of the late 1800s and early 1900s portrayed the “little corners” as ethnically and chronologically separate from the modern national present (Shapiro 14), and just as documentation of regional life through fiction, folklore, and photography in 1830s Britain “identified indigenous cultures as an earlier stage in the development of modern English culture” (Armstrong 252), Indonesian local-color works set regional cultures apart from the modern nation even as they were being appreciated for their distinctiveness and worth.

Upacara was written by Korrie Layun Rampan after he moved from his home province to Yogyakarta, one of the major centers in Indonesia of literary and artistic production. And as the first of the local-color novels, *Upacara* established the opposition between ethnic tradition and Indonesian modernity that became central to the genre. The novel focuses on a Benuaq Dayak community whose only contact with the outside world is a visiting missionary-anthropologist. The customs of this community are viewed from a modern

perspective and associated with the past: the narrator, a young man, complains about the endless and pointless rituals around which community life is centered. The novel implies that modernity will end the community’s way of life: at the conclusion, the protagonist and his wife listen to a radio broadcast of the national anthem and a patriotic speech delivered in a “voice strong and clear, as if it wanted to tear the world apart” ‘suara yang lantang bagai mau merobek dunia’ (123).

The conventions established by this first wave of local-color works continue to exert their influence over contemporary works in the genre. The most recent burst of local-color literary production has been prompted by the “intensifying regionalism” of the post-Suharto era (Allen 3). The adjectives *anthropological* and *ethnographic* are still applied to such novels, and critical discussions of them still center on the characteristics given above.⁵ And it is this overall association of the ethnic with the past and the opposition of the ethnic and the past to the modern that informs the three texts analyzed here: *Api Awan Asap*, which is a prime example of the local-color genre, and “Dulak” and “Patriskiting,” which have many of the features of the genre even if they do not, strictly speaking, belong to it.

Another strain of discourse found its way into Indonesia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, one identifying indigenous peoples as possessing special knowledge about conservation, often romanticizing them as exemplary stewards of the natural environment. The idea of indigenous people as in perfect tune with nature originated with the image of the noble Indian, which was mobilized by the nineteenth-century American conservation movement to criticize the materialistic and destructive bent of modern civilization (Cornell 106; Krech 19). The noble Indian was reborn and redeployed by North American environmentalists in the 1960s and 1970s as the ecological Indian, and in the ensuing years environmental scholars and activists

at a national and international level argued for the value of not just Native American knowledge but also all forms of indigenous knowledge, which had long been dismissed as irrelevant and backward by global development discourse (Cornell 106; Dove 195; Krech 20). The 1980s saw the dissemination of this idea worldwide, so that by the time the United Nations–commissioned report *Our Common Future* was published in 1987—a landmark document in introducing the concept of sustainable development to the international community—the traditional lifestyles of tribal and indigenous peoples were considered able to “offer modern societies many lessons” (World Commission on Environment and Development Overview, par. 46). Taking advantage of such discourse, advocates from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and academics the world over continued to campaign for indigenous people’s rights, including those of Dayaks, building their platform on demands for increased democracy and environmental conservation (Peluso and Harwell). This campaigning had a profound effect on the discourse in Indonesia about Dayaks.

Official government and government-sanctioned discourse often used to cast indigenous populations who practiced swidden agriculture as practitioners of a cultivation that was irrational, “ancient” ‘kuno,’ an inefficient use of natural resources, and environmentally destructive (forest fires were regularly blamed on farmers’ slash-and-burn practices [Arnscheidt 134]). But once the new discourse gained traction among conservation NGOs and later among government officials in Indonesia, it was quickly used by many rural communities to their advantage. As early as 1991, Punan Dayaks were speaking and writing about nature and Punan traditions in ways “appeal[ing] to Western environmentalist fantasies of forest dwellers” (Dove et al. 22). One Meratus Dayak community, by conforming to the ideal that environmentalists had about nature-loving natives,

gained favorable media attention, revenue, and aid (Tsing, “Becoming” 199).

Though this discourse posits that indigenous peoples are crucial to creating an environmentally sustainable future, their importance depends paradoxically on their association with a preindustrial, premodern past. “The myth,” Roy Ellen writes, “is that primitive societies, shorn of the artifice of civilization, are in harmony with their environment through the wisdom of their folkways and that it is only the foolishness and wickedness of modern society that has rejected this” (8). J. Peter Brosius, in his study of Western environmentalist constructions of Penan Dayaks, has shown how the rhetoric about their knowledge of the environment is designed to make the Penan “narratable”: by “appealing to preexisting categories of value: the endangered, the last whisper of an ancient past,” the Penan are transformed into modernity’s former, better self (64). Such discourse, when applied to indigenous peoples by others, runs the risk of falling into what Victor Li terms “neo-primitivism”—exhibiting “solicitude for the primitive Other” and “capitaliz[ing] on the opportunity the Other presents for self-critique *and* self-validation” (19). The indigenous subject becomes an object of contemplation, facilitating reflection on modern society’s ecological sins and offering hope for its reformation.

The points of correspondence between literary local-color discourse about ethnicity and environmentalist discourse about indigenous peoples are clear: both, even as they are predicated on the merit and value of traditional culture, position it as pre- or antimodern. The anthropological sources cited above suggest that environmentalist discourse will empower Dayaks if they are deploying it or disempower them if they are the recipients of it. It is reasonable to entertain the possibility that literary local-color discourse too may be double-edged in this same way with respect to Dayak agency.

“Dulak” and “Patriskiting” both show how favorable discourse about Dayaks can harm Dayaks. These two stories, by non-Dayak writers whose Dayak characters match the constructions of ethnicity and indigeneity found in the Indonesian local-color and international environmentalist discourses, enact through fiction the application of those discourses to Dayaks by others, the application that Brosius criticizes. The stories also offer commentary on the problematic nature of that enacting.

“Dulak,” which appeared in an anthology of short stories by East Kalimantan writers titled *Bingkisan Petir* (“A Parcel of Thunder”), tells of an encounter between Burhan, a dissatisfied businessman who has grown wealthy from illegal logging and coal mining, and an elderly unnamed Dayak who offers him food, shelter, and counsel when Burhan’s car breaks down in the middle of the forest. “Dulak” is not set in a Dayak community and provides no detailed description of the intricacies of Dayak life, and the focus of the narrative remains far more on Burhan than on the Dayak character. But the story aligns Dayak culture with the past and implies its opposition to the modes and values of modern urban existence.

The Dayak is described as leading an austere and solitary life: he lives in a hut by himself, smokes cigarettes he rolls from dried leaves, and eats boiled cassava. In contrast, Burhan womanizes, drinks, goes to the city on pleasure trips, and gets his hair regularly styled at a salon. The difference between Dayak simplicity and the hedonism of modern life is clear. Comparison of country and city values is made in the very first scene, when Toni, Burhan’s driver, thinks, “Luckily, in the forest a culture of helping each other still lived on. Not like in the city” ‘Untungnya, di hutan budaya tolong-menolong masih hidup. Tidak seperti di kota’ (41). In the forest, the old values survive. The boiled cassava that the Dayak later offers Burhan is also aligned with the past. When Burhan eats it,

he regains the sense of taste that he lost after becoming wealthy; the cassava reminds him of how delicious even the simplest foods were in his poverty-stricken childhood.

If the Dayak represents a way of life that modernity has erased, he also represents an environmental wisdom that the world currently lacks. The story is set in a time of environmental crisis. “Scorched land and blackened tree trunks” ‘tanah hangus dengan batang-batang kehitaman’ flank the logging roads, and Toni ponders on the greed that “ruined nature” ‘merusak alam’ and “caused the laws of nature to change” ‘membuat hukum alam jadi berubah’ (43). The disconnect between urban people and the natural world is evident in Burhan and Toni’s fear at being “trapped” ‘terperangkap’ in the forest (48). The Dayak, in contrast, walks freely back and forth between his hut and the stranded car. The Dayak advises Burhan, “Do not eat before you are hungry and stop eating before you are full” ‘Tidak makan sebelum lapar, dan berhenti makan sebelum kenyang’ (54), but Burhan, unable to respect or comprehend the natural laws that rule not only the world but also his own body, does not enjoy his food. The lesson applies to nature’s resources as well: human beings should not keep extracting raw materials when they have enough.

In opposition to modern overconsumption and the exploitation of the environment, the Dayak character is a passive vessel, a man who lives simply and respects the natural world. But the story can also be read as a contemplation of itself: the modern world’s consumption of Dayak culture for its own nourishment. Burhan consumes. The title, “Dulak,” is a Banjarese term meaning the inability to enjoy food because one has eaten too much of it. The irony, of course, is that the illness of overconsumption is cured by an act of consumption, the eating of the boiled cassava. Modern society, the story suggests, finds its remedy in the use of the Dayak for its own purposes—an unsettling conclusion that does

much to explain Burhan's relapse (the Dayak's cure is only temporary) and the final terrifying scene, in which his mouth is crammed with natural resources—trees, coal, and sand—until his feet can no longer support his swelling belly. Modern society, seeking relief in the consumption of traditional and wise indigenous culture, ends up only consuming more. Thus “Dulak” passes judgment on itself: in giving insight and wisdom to the modern reader, it has exploited the Dayak.

In “Dulak,” the Dayak is passive, unwitting. In “Patriskiting,” the non-Dayak application of discourse to Dayaks meets resistance. The protagonist of this story is a man who runs a general supplies store in the city of Malinau and does business with Patriskiting, an elderly leader of an isolated Punan Dayak community accessible only by boat. Waliyunu Heriman's portrayal of Patriskiting and his community relies on Indonesian local-color and international environmentalist constructions of modernity and indigenous life. Patriskiting is over ninety and constantly chews betel, which the young, city-dwelling narrator thinks an old-fashioned, bumpkinish habit. In the opening scene, the “elderly grandfather” ‘kakek renta’ brings to the store a “skull . . . more than a hundred years old. Left to him by his late grandfather from the days of headhunting” ‘Usia tengkorak kepala itu sudah lebih 100 tahun. Warisan almarhum kakeknya dulu zaman *ngayau*’ (276, 273). Patriskiting corresponds perfectly to romanticized notions of environmentally mindful aborigines. He possesses rare medicinal knowledge, and his connection with the natural world is so intimate that he is completely inseparable from it. To Patriskiting, the forest is his family: his ancestors' spirits reside in the surrounding trees, and to leave those spirits would be to leave all that makes him and his community who they are. “We feel at home living with them” ‘Kami betah tinggal bersama mereka,’ he explains to the narrator (274).

But those who keep with old traditions cannot survive for long. The conflict between a traditional community's ways of life and the modern outside world is a standard feature of the local-color genre, and this conflict in the story ends with the demise of Patriskiting's village. The villagers are forcibly removed, and the village is destroyed for the coal deposits on their land. “Patriskiting” advocates on behalf of the old man and his community, yet creating sympathy for the Punan Dayaks requires their downfall. That is, modern society can learn its lesson only if the story ends tragically. The Punan Dayak characters are therefore victims of the “people from the city” ‘orang-orang dari kota’ who want access to the coal on their property—and of the author.

Several details in the relation of the events leading up to the eviction reveal that the lifestyles of Patriskiting and his community are not actually as incompatible with modernity as the government and the narrator believe. Economic exchange between the city and the Dayaks is a necessary part of their everyday existence: they sell produce in the city markets and buy food and supplies from the narrator's store. They are Catholic, and Catholicism is a modern religion, not one of the traditional Dayak religions (often collectively termed *Kaharingan*). Their building of a new church indicates a willingness to conform to some of the outside world's standards about what constitutes civilization and progress: “We Punan don't want people to think we don't have any religion just because we do not have a church” ‘Kami orang Punan tak mau disebut tidak beragama karena tidak punya gereja,’ Patriskiting says (273). That the narrator develops an appreciation for and dependency on the mysterious heirlooms and medicines that Patriskiting brings in to barter suggests that Dayak cultural knowledge may not be so obsolete after all. But ultimately the narrator refuses to see Patriskiting as anything but primitive. When the narrator's wife miscarries after a fall, the narrator blames

Patriskiting's heirlooms and medicines and heads to the village to return them all. Although he watches in horror as the village is bulldozed to the ground, he has played a part in that destruction for the sake of progress.

The resistance of Patriskiting becomes apparent in the story's last scene:

When people saw him last, he was fighting with those people from the city. For the first time, people saw Patriskiting angry. Brandishing his knife and spear. Groaning like a ferocious bear. In the still of the night, Patriskiting and his wife had probably hobbled off to meet their ancestors residing in the majesty of the forest.

Orang-orang melihatnya terkahir kali saat Patriskiting rebut dengan orang-orang dari kota itu. Pertama kali, orang-orang melihat Patriskiting murka. Mengacungkan mandau dan tombak. Mengerang seperti beruang geram. Mungkin saat malam senyap Patriskiting dan istrinya tertatih menemui nenek moyangnya yang bersemayam dalam keagungan hutan.

(280)

The city people who uproot him, the narrator, and the author all transform the old man into something he never was: a violent, animal-like savage standing in the way of progress, a creature of the past who belongs in the forest with the dead. Modernity, in order to regret what it has become, must create a past to mourn.

"Dulak" and "Patriskiting" portray a modern world in which the primitivizing of the Dayak is inevitable, and "Patriskiting" suggests the futility of resistance. *Api Awan Asap* is set in a similar landscape but has one important difference: it offers a strategy for survival: retaining control of one's circumstances and self may lie in conforming voluntarily to the discourses that the non-Dayak world applies to Dayaks. The novel itself can be taken as an example of the submission it counsels, just as "Dulak" and "Patriskiting" enact, in their narratives, the very things they expose. There is an interesting difference in the portrayal of Benuaq Dayak traditions be-

tween Korrie's *Upacara* and *Api Awan Asap*: the first condemns them as stifling; the second assesses them positively. Michael Bodden has observed that the shift from *Upacara* to *Api Awan Asap* reflects the shift from New Order discourse regarding regional backwardness to the attitudes toward the regional that marked the post-Suharto period (7). There is indeed something of the chameleon in the trajectory of Korrie's career as a local colorist—accepting the dominant discourse of one regime, then complying with its successor. This flexibility was rewarded, each novel receiving the Jakarta Arts Council Prize. It may look suspiciously like selling out, or one may consider it evidence of a literary adaptiveness that enabled Korrie to rise to and maintain his status as the best-known Dayak writer on the national literary scene. Seen in this light, the writing of *Api Awan Asap* is not unlike the strategic submission to dominant discourse undertaken by the Meratus Dayaks of Tsing's accounts. But the true cunning of the novel is not its alignment with local-color and conservation discourse but its providing what amounts to a survival guide for Dayaks: how they can gain agency through submission.

At its outset, the novel appears to fall in line with the constructions of Dayaks set by the generic conventions for local color and international environmentalist discourse. It meets all the criteria for a local-color work: it centers on a community that is trying to maintain its customs in an era where "the developing world and change are colliding ever faster into tradition" 'dunia berkembang dan perubahan makin cepat menabrak tradisi' (23), and it establishes a firm link between the past and life in the community—in the opening scene, shamans perform a ritual, moving "as if they were searching for a world that is lost, that would be rediscovered" 'seakan-akan mencari sebuah dunia yang hilang, yang kemudian baru ditemukan kembali' (1). A few pages later, we meet the *petinggi*, the chief of the community, Jepi, whose ecological attri-

butes could not be more pronounced: recently given a prestigious government award for environmental conservation, he shares his knowledge with a television reporter about respecting nature and responsible agriculture. “The original inhabitants view earth, roots, trees, and leaves as possessing souls” ‘Penduduk asli memandang tanah, akar, pohon, dan daun memiliki jiwa,’ Petinggi Japi tells the reporter (23). In response to the accusation of swidden farming’s destructiveness, he contrasts the “wisdom” ‘kearifan’ of indigenous farming practices with the methods of “greedy people who come from the city, cutting down the forest, taking trees, digging mines, and clearing land, setting fire to the forest so that smoke covers the entire sky” ‘orang-orang yang datang dari kota dengan rakusnya membabat hutan, mengambil pohon, menggali tambang, dan membuka tanah, membakar hutan hingga asap api menutupi langit’ (30). He asserts, “The ancestors have taught [those who live here] how to avoid environmental destruction” ‘[n]enek moyang telah mengajar mereka agar terhindar dari kerusakan lingkungan hidup’ (31). The Benuaq Dayak community and its chief seem to embody all the fantasies of local-color and international environmentalist discourses about traditional ways and indigenous wisdom.

Yet there are hints throughout the novel that the community’s members—especially Petinggi Japi and his daughter, Nori—are playing roles that the outside world expects of them. The community has had a long history of changing to suit the times and circumstances. The longhouse at Dempar, it turns out, was recently built—an offshoot of a longhouse of another community, located at Ulu, which itself is a new settlement. Both buildings are examples of the expansion and relocation that have been continual among the Benuaq Dayaks for two thousand years. The flexibility of Benuaq Dayak practices and beliefs are further demonstrated when Nori turns a sacred lake into a spot for ecotour-

ism. She rejects the story of the lake’s divine origins, accepting instead the modern scientific explanation for its formation (a volcanic explosion), and Petinggi Japi, admitting his own doubts about the lake’s spiritual origin, lets Nori continue with her project.

Nori’s ecotourism venture caters to the modern world’s fantasies about Dayak culture, providing comfortable bungalows and facilities built in accordance with “traditional architecture” ‘arsitektur tradisional’ and ensuring the protection of the flora and fauna surrounding the lake. The project is not disingenuous: Nori truly believes that the area is “an asset that must be saved” ‘aset yang harus diselamatkan.’ But that her conservationist outlook is a relatively new development and not intrinsic to Benuaq culture is indicated by Sakatn’s puzzled response: “Must be saved? . . . Nature has been keeping its own self safe for millions of years” ‘Deselamatkan? . . . Alam telah menyelamatkan dirinya sendiri sejak jutaan tahun lampau’ (42). Nori’s environmentalism and the new traditional buildings create a positive public image and help the community financially.

The television reporter’s interview with Petinggi Japi focuses on how premodern the Dayak community is. The reporter asks how the community plans to survive the toll that modernization is taking on tradition, and the camera roams around the longhouse, paying attention to the most recognizably traditional aspects of Benuaq Dayak life: the women weaving, which Petinggi Japi notes is an activity dating back to “olden times” ‘zaman dahulu’; a shield whose “brightly colored carvings displayed aspects of manliness and battle prowess” ‘ukirannya yang diberi warna semarak, menampilkan segi-segi kejantanan dan keahlian berperang’ (25, 27):

The camera went on recording, and went on recording, capturing images antique and authentic. The reporter from the provincial capital appeared exceedingly satisfied with

his exclusive interview. The cameraman too felt that the images he had recorded were beautiful, all that could be desired.

Kamera terus merekam, dan terus merekam, menangkap gambar-gambar yang antik dan asli. Reporter televisi dari kota propinsi tampak puas sekali dengan wawancara khusus. Kamerawan pun merasa gambar-gambar yang direkamnya sangat memenuhi keinginan keindahan. (33)

What the television crew has seen is not a lie. But it is the product of a manipulation. Petinggi Jipi does not conceal the role that modern technology has played in the creation of their new, award-winning agricultural system, but the words “tradition” ‘tradisi,’ “wisdom” ‘kearifan,’ and “ancestors” ‘nenek moyang’ appear continually in his answers.

The modern world is enthralled with the picturesqueness of the primitive, but it considers communities like the village of Dempar to be incompatible with modernity. Televisions play in the background throughout the novel, feeding everyone in Dempar a steady message about what constitutes progress and what backwardness. Progress, says the message, is the hustle and bustle of Jakarta. Images of the “gleaming gold spire of the Monas monument, Ancol, the Ragunan Zoo, and main roads forever crowded with luxurious-looking cars and other vehicles” ‘kilau emas pucak’⁶ Monas, Ancol, Kebun Binatang Ragunan, dan jalan-jalan utama yang selalu dipadati mobil dan kendaraan mewah’ make the teenage Nori want to visit the capital someday (10). Examples of backwardness are found in the footage shown periodically on the news of other Dayak communities being bulldozed to make way for new construction projects. The outside world wants their Dayaks “antique and authentic” even as it refuses to tolerate their continued presence.

But because of Nori and Petinggi Jipi’s cunning, Dempar can assume the persona of a traditionally minded and environmentally

respectful Dayak community without becoming helpless, as they would have been had that persona been imposed on them by others. They are traditional enough to be perceived as nonmodern but not so backward as to be candidates for eviction and resettlement; they are ecologically mindful enough to provide modern society with wisdom but not so uncivilized as to be ignored in the pressure for land development. They must walk a fine line to maintain their agency, submitting but not surrendering entirely to the constructions of others. At a longhouse meeting to discuss strategies for retaining ownership of the land, Petinggi Jipi cautions the community’s members not to fall into the stereotypes of violent, antimodern Dayaks circulated by the outside world. Responding to the suggestion of one man to “return to the headhunting days” ‘kembali ke zaman *ngayau*’ and the remark of two others who refuse to become “coolies” ‘kuli’ on someone else’s property, he points out how archaic they sound, reverting to “the emotions and instincts of [their] ancestors” ‘emosi dan naluri nenek moyang’ and using “a term from the colonial era. The proper term nowadays is ‘employee’ or ‘worker’” ‘Istilah kuli itu istilah zaman penjajah. Istilah sekarang ini karyawan atau buruh’ (98, 99, 100).

The novel’s message about the need to submit in just the right way to dominant discourse finds allegorical expression in the fantastic transformation of Jue into “the images always being shown on television about primitive peoples from prehistoric times who lived in caves” ‘gambar-gambar yang sering diperlihatkan televisi tentang orang-orang primitif di zaman dahulu yang hidup di gua-gua’ (150). Lost in the underground caves, he manages to stay alive for twenty years: his eyes adjust to the darkness “like the eyes of a bat” ‘seakan-akan mata kelelawar,’ and “a kind of instinct or sixth sense” ‘semacam insting atau indra keenam’ enables him to navigate the underground passageways and find raw snakes, fish, and birds’ nests to sus-

tain himself (53). When Jue emerges from the earth, he looks “truly no different from an ancient human being” ‘Benar-benar tak berbeda dari wujud manusia purba’ (150). Yet his new appearance is the result not of regression but of adaptation: assuming a caveman form has allowed him to survive. He is reminiscent of the Stone Age–style Basap Dayaks who made possible Bernabas Sebilang’s strategic alignment with dominant discourse.

Resistance, autonomy of expression, asserting one’s true identity—“Dulak,” “Patris-kiting,” and *Api Awan Asap* suggest that these are luxuries that many Dayak communities in Kalimantan must forgo if they are to survive. Survival, Tsing observes, may require hiding in plain sight, in the very heart of the “imagined Other” (“Becoming” 181). The persona of wise tribal elder embodies the fantasies of non-Dayaks and also teaches Dayaks how to embody those fantasies. Donning the appearance of a primitive caveman transfixes the modern world and also teaches Dayaks how to transfix the modern world. All three works of fiction present to their non-Dayak audience exactly what that audience wants: old customs and ecological wisdom, images “antique and authentic.” Yet in these “antique and authentic” images lie lessons for Dayak readers, cautionary tales about leaving the power of discourse to others, a survival manual.

NOTES

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1. The quotations and opinions of Herman A. Salam (3 Feb. 2013), Novieta Christina (1 Feb.), Shantined

(10 Feb.), and Syafruddin Pernyata (2 Feb.) are from personal interviews conducted and recorded by me. All translations in the essay are mine.

2. Not all writers who claim Dayak descent are interested in featuring Dayaks in their work. Novieta Christina’s father is Manyan Dayak, but her cultural knowledge is so tenuous that she prefers not to write in that vein.

3. The collection was reprinted without the inner cover, but the stories’ content and misinformation remained unchanged.

4. *Segi Sosiologis* was actually published using the alternative, Dutch-orthography-based spelling of Yakob Sumarjo’s name, Jakob Sumardjo.

5. See *Namaku Teweraut*, an “anthropological novel” ‘roman antropologi’ (2000) by Ani Sekarningsih, and *Sali*, an “ethnographic novel” ‘novel etnografi’ (2007) by Dewi Linggasari. For recent discussions of local color as a genre, see Bandel; Jamal T. Suryanata.

6. This is a typo in the text: “pucak” is a misspelling of *puncak*.

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From the Cold War to the Cruelty of Violence: Jean Franco's Critical Trajectory from *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City* to *Cruel Modernity*

ARTURO ARIAS

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION GENERATED A NEW COMMUNIST PARANOIA IN THE UNITED STATES. INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA GREW DRAMATICALLY after Castro's rise to power in 1959 and was partly responsible for the explosive growth in the number of scholars specializing in hemispheric issues during the 1960s. Latin Americans, in turn, saw this phase of the Cold War as a furthering of imperial aggression by the United States. The Eisenhower administration's authoritarian diplomatic maneuvers to isolate Guatemala by accusing the country's democratically elected president, Jacobo Arbenz (1950–54), of being a communist and by pressuring members of the Organization of American States to do likewise had already alarmed intellectuals and artists in Latin America five years before.¹ On 17 June 1954, Carlos Castillo Armas and a band of a few hundred mercenaries invaded the country from Honduras with logistical support from the Central Intelligence Agency in an operation code-named PBSUCCESS, authorized by President Eisenhower in August 1953.² By 1 July 1954 the so-called Movement of National Liberation had taken over Guatemala. Angela Fillingim's research evidences how the United States officially viewed Guatemala as "Pre-Western," according to "pre-established criteria," because the Latin American country had failed to eliminate its indigenous population (5–6). Implicitly, the model was that of the nineteenth-century American West. As a solution, the State Department proposed "finishing the Conquest."

The historian Greg Grandin has called the Guatemalan coup "perhaps the single most important event in twentieth-century US–Latin American relations." He adds:

The overthrow of Arbenz convinced many Latin American reformers, democrats, and nationalists that the United States was less a model to be emulated than a danger to be feared. Che Guevara, for example, was in Guatemala working as a doctor and witnessed firsthand the effects of US intervention. . . . For its part, the United States promised to turn Guatemala into a "showcase for democracy" but instead created a laboratory of repression. Practices institutionalized there—such as death

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squad killings conducted by professionalized intelligence agencies—spread throughout Latin America in the coming decades.

By the early 1960s, when the Cuban crisis was beginning, Latin America was already on a path to contesting the United States' Cold War premises.

One of the academics best known for critiquing this period is Jean Franco, who frames the issues relating to Latin America and the Cold War in *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City* (2002) and *Cruel Modernity* (2013). Like Che Guevara, she was a firsthand witness of the United States' intervention in Guatemala. While vacationing in Italy in 1952, she had met her future husband, the Guatemalan painter Juan Antonio Franco (1920–94), who was there on a scholarship from his government. In 1953 she sailed back from Italy with him to his home country, where she married him and lived until December 1954. Although Franco was on the scene during the last year of the Arbenz government, she seldom mentioned the experience in her writings. She did so for the first time in her introduction to *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*, stating how “from one day to the next the city became a hostile territory—friends had taken refuge in embassies; there was no longer news on the radio, only marimba music; and at night the curfew confined us to the house.” It was, she added, “an experience that was to leave a trace in everything I have written” (1). Franco's husband had to flee to Mexico in the wake of his government's tragic fall. This exposure to the Guatemalan coup introduced Franco to the trauma of political cruelty that scarred her for life. It should not be surprising, then, that the transgression of human dignity and human rights, the torture, rape, massacres, and disappearances, suffered in 1954 by individuals she knew personally, would become the topics of her work. In this essay I explore how the consequences of the coup engineered by the United States not only informed Franco's the-

oretical understanding of the nature of Latin America's modernity but also led to her comprehension and problematization of the role of violence in *Cruel Modernity*.

First and foremost it should be said that although Franco's circumstance was traumatic, it was a nonpareil opportunity for a Western scholar of British origin. Franco happened to be uncannily positioned to undergo, however briefly, life as an other—that is, to experience the daily ordeals typically endured by the subalternized and racialized populations of the world. After all, the racialization that began during the sixteenth-century Spanish invasion of the Americas recurs grotesquely to this day, as I explain later. Racialization is a “macabre experience of genocide and ecocide,” claims the scholar Adam Lifshy (2), questioning the legitimacy of Eurocentric attempts to make human rights part of nation building in the Americas. Franco lived this situation from within a small but prominent Guatemalan artistic circle that included her husband, his painter friends forming the Saker-Ti group,³ and young progressive socialist writers, as well as other friends, some of whom, such as the poet Alaíde Foppa (1914–80),⁴ were beginning to question gender roles, prefiguring contemporary discourse on gender as performance. Franco would inevitably seek an explanation of the Guatemalan coup by interrogating the nation's cultural production. At the same time, because she shared daily experiences with artists who were also political actors in the defense of Guatemalan democracy—and who paid a political price when the government they defended and to which some belonged was overthrown—Franco did not separate the cultural world from the political and social spheres, as most Anglo-American literary critics focusing on Latin America did in the late 1950s.

In her Guatemalan friends' visceral reaction to the invasion and destruction of their country, Franco found scattered elements that enabled her to begin formulating expla-

nations of what modernity meant for Latin America. She came to understand in the Guatemala of 1954 the emergence of what later became known in economics as the dependency theory, after Raúl Prebisch, director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL in Spanish), and his colleagues realized that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer ones. On the contrary, it often generated serious economic problems. That possibility had not been predicted by classical economic theory, which assumed that economic growth would benefit all countries even if the wealth was not always equally shared. The Brazilian economist Theotonio Dos Santos defined dependency theory as “a certain structure of the world economy . . . that . . . favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies” (236). Early on, Franco applied many of the theory’s premises to her cultural analyses. She presents them in the first part of *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*. Whether she sought out dependency theorists or pioneered many of the ideas herself as a consequence of her lived experience and observations is beside the point. She was thinking as a Latin American intellectual.

Her position created a tangible break with other European and American scholars of her generation—especially with those who plunged into area studies in the 1950s and early 1960s. Launched in a developmentalist mentality that introduced the notions of underdevelopment and the Third World, area studies (which included Latin American studies) was a response partly to the increasing global influence of the United States but also to inadequacies in United States-centric understandings of the world in the context of the Cold War. Federal funding encouraged the field’s growth. In the United States, area studies was strengthened by the passing of Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958.

Franco was ahead of the curve. Her experience incubated, as nothing else could, an understanding of death, transgression, and lack of human dignity in the face of blatant imperial will to power. From her earliest work, she mixed what some twenty years later came to be called the theoretical turn with her lived experiences in a uniquely eclectic way. Her position was contested on ideological grounds in the United States by American social scientists of the 1960s. She was ignored by most contemporary literature scholars.

For Franco, what mattered was identifying the “drama of loss and dislocation” generated by the United States, a drama in which literature was the “protagonist . . . not only because it articulated the utopian but also because it is implicated in [the utopian’s] demise” (*Decline* 1). This issue became the pre-occupying theme of her work. In this sense, Franco was a pioneer, anticipating Latin American cultural studies by a couple of decades. She instinctively knew to critique the symbolic production and the living experiences of social reality in Latin America. Her criticism was not new. It was rooted in the tradition of hemispheric ideologues in which writers seldom distinguished between philosophy, literature, political tracts, and other forms of written knowledge. Latin American men of letters had intervened since at least the early nineteenth century to legitimize exemplary narratives of national formation and integration while building their nations as entities constituted by discourses, symbols, images, and rites. The Uruguayan critic Angel Rama (1926–83) delineates this literary heritage in his book *The Lettered City* (*La ciudad letrada* [1984]).

Franco’s first book, *The Modern Culture of Latin America* (1967), demonstrates her understanding of dependency theory and internal colonialism, a trend she witnessed firsthand in Guatemala.⁵ The study was, in the words of Alfredo Roggiano, “the first serious work on Latin American culture published in

England.” The reviewer added that it was “a daring and controversial book . . . remarkable for its wealth of commentaries and suggestions over a broad range of specialized topics. Some of these, to be sure, will arouse dissent and require further refinement” (105). Needless to say, the controversial issues in the late 1960s were the sociological elements of Franco’s analysis, which claimed that Latin American cultural producers responded to their nations’ political preoccupations: “an intense social concern has been the characteristic of Latin-American art,” and art and literature “played a social role, with the artist acting as a guide, teacher, and conscience of his country” (*Modern Culture* 1). Franco also asserted that social, political, and cultural problems gave Latin American writers a sense of responsibility linked to the search for national identities and concluded that “while so much of Western art is concerned with individual experience or relations between the sexes, most of the major works of Latin American literature and even some of its painting are much more concerned with social ideals” (282).

From our perspective we can easily detect the influence of Franco’s Guatemalan experience and of 1960s Western Marxism on *The Modern Culture of Latin America*, but the book also contains a blueprint of *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City* and of what later was called cultural studies. Franco anticipated Rama—whose *The Lettered City* came out posthumously in Spanish in 1984—by seventeen years. More galling, perhaps for many American scholars of that period, must have been that underneath the cool, rational demeanor of her arguments Franco deployed a sense of ethics that many other professors of her generation—Cold War liberals for the most part—severely lacked.

In the United States, Latin American studies scholars adopted the positivist approach that dominated most social science research during the first half of the twentieth century. They did not consider humanistic

studies serious because such endeavors were not scientific, neither quantifiable nor objective according to the received wisdom of the time. Most Spanish literature departments in the United States confirmed these reservations and were largely dedicated to a rarefied, effete, and purely empirical study of literature as belles lettres that seldom transcended what British literary critics labeled close reading: providing a careful and sustained but fairly conventional interpretation of a brief passage from a text while ignoring the social context and the political atmosphere in which the text was embedded.

In the heavily politicized world of Latin America, however, literature and culture were produced as blueprints for the reconfiguring of societies by engaged artists who could pay with death, prison, or exile for their creations. Experimental and inventive, cultural production was also a form of social activism wherein the resulting symbolic output often displayed a *parti pris* laden with utopian hope. Cultural objects and books were additional tools in the struggle against the United States’ imperialism. Writers and artists socialized regularly with and mobilized in the same organizations as social scientists, often sharing jail cells or experiences of exile with them. Thus, in the Latin American mind the division between the humanities and the social sciences did not exist. The two were alternative expressions of knowledge production with similar aims. Humanists and social scientists both inhabited a hermeneutic and theoretical realm that, to paraphrase Abril Trigo (374), accommodated their long-term interest in cultural production, social knowledge, and politics. Latin Americans seldom distinguished between a political scientist and a novelist. Both were public intellectuals.

Such heterodox thinking was introduced into Latin American literary studies in the United States by Franco, who bridged the cultural divide in ways of thinking about the humanities and social sciences with her

experience (her trauma, even) and her foresight. She knew before many observers that relations between the United States and Latin America had been poisoned for most of the twentieth century and that the internal peace and prosperity of the United States were bought by the political catastrophes it imposed on its neighbors to the south.

The role of the Cuban Revolution in fusing cultural production and sociopolitical analysis was a determining factor in the growth of Latin American studies in the United States (Arias, Hale, and Alvarez), since the Cuban Revolution was a sociopolitical event that was transformative of Latin American culture as a whole. The political complexity of the 1960s, combined with the emergence of the so-called jet era and unprecedented middle-class prosperity, inspired, for the first time, many graduate students to travel south of the border to gain knowledge and develop research projects. This experience radicalized many students, who, on their return, threw their energies into supporting popular struggles in Latin America, before obtaining their graduate degrees and initiating academic careers in the 1970s. The students who chose to work on cultural issues as symbolic frames for sociopolitical conundrums became Franco's first disciples. What's more, we can see the impact of her work on both sides of the Rio Grande.

I was not the only scholar who grew up in Latin America reading the Spanish translation of Franco's first book, *La cultura moderna en América Latina*. Published in Mexico in 1971, the translation circulated widely in Latin America's literature departments. It offered a new way of looking at literary culture and must have influenced Angel Rama as he began taking notes for *The Lettered City*.

We can already see efforts at a dialogue with Franco in the work of Roberto Fernández Retamar. Writing from a Cuban Marxist perspective, he attempted in "Caliban" (1971) to present the cannibal figure in Shakespeare's

The Tempest as a proletarian alternative to the ethereal figure of Ariel, perceived as too abstract, intellectual, and effete. Fernández Retamar's logic was flawed, in ways that may now appear self-evident, yet his text paved the way for a discussion of the possibilities of developing a post-Western epistemology that followed the line of thought Franco had inaugurated. Still, the image of Caliban seems to underscore European influence. As Gayatri Spivak pointed out, the image enforced a "foreclosure" of indigenous presence in the debate on Latin American identity (118). What Spivak did not mention was that in Latin America the indigenous subject is indeed the privileged interlocutor of the West, whereas a Western subject of African descent is not. Having noted this point in Franco's *The Modern Culture*, Fernández Retamar linked Caliban primarily to the African presence in the Caribbean, through Frantz Fanon's deconstruction of former Eurocentric readings of this Shakespearean character.

Julio Ramos argues that before the publication of Fernández Retamar's article, traditional Latin Americanists believed in the integrative capacity of national literatures and art, whereas Latin American cultural studies as it evolved in the 1980s criticized the concept of a national culture as an apparatus of power (241). Perhaps it would be better to say that earlier essays, however heterogeneous and irreducible to autonomous principles, were framed by a set of epistemological precepts aimed at nation building, a phenomenon that presupposed economic modernization, cultural modernism, and democratization, as framed by Franco in *The Modern Culture of Latin America*. Latin American cultural studies as we know the field today emerged from the cracks and fault lines of the failed nation building in the late 1980s, when the Central American civil wars put an end to the revolutionary period that began with the Cuban Revolution. This new era is what inspired *Cruel Modernity*.

By the end of the 1980s most academics agreed that the macronarratives of the 1960s could not adequately explain the rapid changes introduced by the fall of the Soviet Union, the end of the two-superpower world, and emergent globalization. It was no accident that this period coincided with the fall of many brutal South American dictators who had come to power in the 1970s and with the transition from revolutionary civil war to fragile peace treaties beckoning democracy into Central America. As usual in Latin America, the political and economic transformations implied cultural ones.

Again, Franco was ahead of the curve. *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (1989) was her initial response to this transition, underscoring the critical importance of gender issues. Yet, like many of us, she still had to return to the aftermath of the horror of the 1970s and 1980s, with their legacy of censorship, repression, torture, disappearances, and exile, and to make further sense of these unspeakable practices and unnatural acts to achieve a healing closure. This is what she ultimately does in *Cruel Modernity*.

For me this text complements *Decline and Fall*. In each work Franco explores the issues related to the transition from war to peace, from dictatorship to democracy, concluding that dependent societies cannot nation build, modernize economically, or democratize in the First World sense because their dependence on First World capital investments and political tutelage—in short, coloniality—cancels these possibilities out. As conceived by Aníbal Quijano and Walter D. Mignolo in the 1990s and anticipated in the 1980s by the Peruvian critic Antonio Cornejo Polar (1936–97),⁶ *coloniality* describes how, despite Latin America's political independence from Spain and Portugal, the modern/colonial pattern established in the sixteenth century continues to our day, structuring racialization, subalternization, and knowledge production. Yet Franco does not men-

tion Quijano or Mignolo. She reached some of their conclusions on her own, though she credits Cornejo Polar with recognizing in the encounter between the Inca leader Atahualpa and the Spanish priest Vicente de Valverde a "ground zero," a point where orality and writing "demonstrate their mutual estrangement . . . and aggressive repulsion" (*Decline* 62).

In *Decline and Fall* Franco's reflection on the Cold War crafts the impossibility of modernization, nation building, and stability in the shadow of empire, condemning modernity to obsolescence. *Cruel Modernity* explores the consequences of this failure to achieve modernity: in Franco's logic, it inevitably leads to mass violence, which may be abhorrent but is not random. Let us not forget that, in her understanding, all types of violence, national and corporate as well as intraethnic, distinguish the United States as a modern nation-state. Violence produces a logic of repression that often remains unsaid but is always present in its everydayness, if traumatic only for those who suffer it. We can include in this genealogy of violence a list of episodes, from slavery and the Native American genocide to the mass incarceration of men of color. In *Cruel Modernity* violence appears as a category of analysis and an intensive declaration of difference. Violence generates traumatic events, which more often than not affect the subjects located at the subalternized intersections of race, sex, gender, and class. She dwells mostly with the nature of these subjects, who are themselves victims of events that prevent them from emerging from the subalternized and racialized situation in which they live.

Given the imperial history of the Americas that Franco outlines, in which the United States has, for over 150 years, used invasions, confinement, and every type of physical and economic punishment as means of domination and political control, it should not be surprising that, subsequently, most subjects residing in those invaded nations, often perceived as the periphery of the West, under-

stand political violence in a Fanonian sense. Yet this understanding more often than not prevents modern societies from taking root, except fleetingly, because it points toward genocide as imperially justified yet often implemented by local authorities. In part 2 of *Decline and Fall*, “Peripheral Fantasies,” Franco anticipates some recent analyses, such as Angela Fillingim’s work, cited above, on how the United States viewed Guatemala as pre-Western, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s claim, from a racialized perspective, that “colonial and racial subjects are marked as dispensable” (246). This attitude enabled the West to create an ontological differentiation to justify imperial goals, separating conquering European men from those outside the purview of allegedly superior Christian religion and culture, who were assigned a lack, or absence, an “innate” inferiority. Violence in the global South thus became for Eurocentric thinking an inevitable, daily, and never-ending occurrence. This ontological naturalization of racism operated at the center of the everyday violence that governed even the smallest domestic events. Colonialism radicalized and naturalized the exercise of everyday violence. With this behavioral pattern came others tied to military invasion, such as rape.

In part 3 of *Decline and Fall*, “Cultural Revolution,” Franco explores not just the war between Western values and national cultures, as well as the anticapitalist ethos espoused by men and women of letters, but also, primarily, how the Cold War was a direct factor in the impossibility of bringing Eurocentric thinking to fruition. Under Cold War premises, the United States built up and encouraged the military regimes that from 1954 onward destroyed the Latin American masses’ will to power, changing the political and cultural map of Central and South America. As Franco makes evident, the rearticulation of national identities and the consolidation of cultural hegemony were central

to the emerging neoliberal politics and economic model implemented in the hemisphere after the coup against Chile’s president, Salvador Allende, in 1973. These processes were also affected by the ways in which the memory of the “dirty wars” was recovered and reconstructed in different parts of the region.

Ultimately, the Cold War, as read emblematically from the Guatemalan experience, turned freedom into enslavement through the violence imposed by sovereign exceptionality and by rigidly controlled political conditions that, in any case, proved incapable of regulating Guatemalan—or Latin American—social life. Latin American scholarship, politicized by interventionism, transformed itself radically and broke in significant ways with forms of power and knowledge prevalent in the United States. This rupture enabled the emergence of inventive reconsiderations of North-South relations and produced conceptual alternatives to the authoritarian nature of Latin American modernity. In this logic, the Cold War experience was both destructive and redemptive.

Picking up where *Decline and Fall* left off, *Cruel Modernity*—especially, but not exclusively, in chapters 6 and 7—explores how the so-called politics of agreement and the promotion of “reconciliation” in the name of progress and modernization allowed for the careful implementation and maximization of neoliberalism (248), resulting in disenfranchised societies and political models mimicking democracy more than carrying it out. Oppositional forces were pacified through the staging of democracy and the domestication of raw memories.

During this process, paradigmatic spaces of violence (torture centers, political prisons) were resignified as monuments commemorating transitions to democracy. These traces of the past were marked by rituals to remind citizens of their obliterated memory. The struggles demanding accountability for past human rights violations became a material

and symbolic attempt to prevent the erasure of a part of the social body.

Thus, Franco's new reflection on sustained patterns of extreme violence makes sense of the sociopolitical chaos of the post-Cold War era while also rehumanizing the victims of violence. This "necropolis" (her word [235]) is now enmeshed in cycles of violence waged by new actors such as drug cartels, operating (in theory) outside the boundaries and control of national governments, while states crumble under the weight of neoliberalism and globalization.

In Guatemala, Franco had witnessed how indigenous subjects were configured as invisibilized bodies coexisting with modernity and treated as nonsubjects excluded from conventional discourse. Ruling elites condemned these racialized and subalternized subjects to social forms of nonexistence. Her reflection on this topic informs especially chapters 2 through 4 of *Cruel Modernity* but operates as an axis of the book and reappears in the later chapters and in the afterword.

From chapter 1, in which Franco considers the 1937 massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic, her analysis evidences how colonialized male subjects not only lack authority but also appear to authorities as constant threats. Often the male subject's smallest action is magnified by the authorities into a full-blown crisis necessitating a hysterical, out-of-proportion response. Colonialized women, too, are always prey to the raping gaze of authorities and local elites, who often enact their desires violently, especially in lawless societies where local gangs and drug cartels carry more weight, normalizing rape and other forms of physical torture on gendered and racialized bodies. Franco shows how the same behaviors generating abject acts in war become legitimated in modern-day civil societies on a daily basis when these societies are composed mostly of subalternized and racialized populations, as they are in Mexico, Peru, and Guatemala,

all countries with a significant proportion of indigenous peoples. Franco thus adds in the afterword that as hard as it is to read about these acts, they cannot be "beyond representation" and allowed to transform themselves into something "mystical, outside the bounds of political action" (248). They should not be avoided as apocalyptic markers characterizing a problem beyond solution. Franco prefers to politicize this set of complex social relations based on asymmetrical relations of power precisely because the "other," premised to be subalternized and racialized, was denied its humanity. By extension, control of subalternized and racialized populations had to be made normative, as if they were prisoners of war, in daily conditions resembling limit experiences. Not to politicize these events, however distasteful they are, Franco implies, reinvisibilizes the humanity of populations that have been "othered," as happens with the cartel violence in Juárez, Mexico, or in Rio's favelas in Brazil. After all, it is when these inhabitants struggle to regain their humanity that, more often than not, violence is exercised against them. Needless to say, the visceral acts perpetrated by subalternized and racialized populations in these colonialized settings in response to abuses of all kinds committed against them always result in further pain and suffering for them. This chain of factors is integral to the production of their subjectivities. In turn, subalternized and racialized populations enact that violence precisely to maintain a sense of psychic integrity and pride, a sense they can achieve only by contesting violations of their persons.

Cruel Modernity mostly examines the violence perpetrated by the state on colonialized subjects (and primarily on gendered subjects) and signifies between the lines the state's logic. In this last sense, Franco's book embodies a gastronomic consumption—if I may use this metaphor—of the various theoretical currents of the last thirty years. Franco produced the work virtually without

recourse to the theoretical terminology that often mars academic articles and is discarded just as fast. In doing so she elicits a reflection on the ultimate meaning of colonial violence perpetrated on racialized and gendered subjects. *Cruel Modernity* becomes a shadow biography of sorts, taking us from Franco's own apprenticeship in the Cold War years to the ultimate consequences of the imperial devastation of the Americas. In her life, and in her book, Franco crafts memory politics with the moral imperative to push forth transitional-justice processes. We can but hope *Cruel Modernity* generates this effect.

NOTES

1. The United States pressured members of the Organization of American States to approve the Declaration of Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States against International Communist Intervention at the Tenth Inter-American Conference on 28 March 1954. Seventeen members voted in favor of the declaration. Mexico and Argentina abstained. Guatemala voted against it. Costa Rica later signaled its support of the resolution. See "Avalon." Frida Kahlo's last demonstration in her life was in Mexico City, protesting the United States' intervention in Guatemala.
2. See Cullather, whose *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952–1954* grew out of the Central Intelligence Agency's publication *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala, 1952–1954*.
3. *Saker-Ti* means "dawn" in the Mayan language Cackchiquel. The group formed in the late 1940s. All its members would go into exile in 1954.
4. Foppa was "disappeared" by the Guatemalan military regime in December 1980, at age sixty-seven.
5. Internal colonialism is a concept whose origins can be traced to the mid-1960s, in the work of the Mexican social scientists Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Pablo González Casanova, which addresses the political inequalities between regions in a single nation-state. An internal colony typically produced wealth for the benefit of those closely associated with the power apparatus of the state, usually located in the capital city, dominated by members of the metropolis displaying Eurocentric traits. Studies of internal colonialism addressed the gradual racialization of indigenous and Afro-descendant populations.
6. Mignolo developed the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano's category of the colonality of power, in an attempt to understand the historical formation and ethnoracial conformation of Latin America. He concurs with the foundational point introduced by Quijano that the Spanish invasion of the Americas not only articulated a pattern of producing racialized identities and an unequal hierarchy whereby European identities and knowledge were considered superior to all others in what amounts to a caste system but also generated mechanisms of social domination that preserved this social classification into the present.

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Theaters of Pain:
Violence and
Photography*The Photograph is violent.*—Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida**Who are you, who will look at these photographs, and by what right, and
what will you do about it?*—James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*

GABRIELA NOUZEILLES

IN HIS ENTRY FOR *EYE* IN *LE DICTIONNAIRE CRITIQUE* (1929–30), GEORGES BATAILLE REFERS TO THE HUMAN COMPULSION TO LOOK AS A response to a “blind thirst for blood,” triggered by the spectacle of extreme violence, including torture.¹ But why, Bataille wonders, would someone’s “absurd eyes be attracted, like a cloud of flies, to something so repugnant?” (19). He attributes to the human eye the cannibalistic disposition that comes from our “inexplicable acuity of horrors” and from the disturbing fascination that the eye itself exerts over our sensibility. The extreme seductiveness of the eye, Bataille hints, is probably “at the very edge of horror” (17). He connects the unstable edge that separates such contradictory responses with the idea of the eye as a critical tool, in which “critical” refers to the act of discerning and the act of cutting—as shown in the infamous opening of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí’s film *Un chien andalou* (“An Andalusian Dog” [1929]), when the eye of a young woman is sliced open by a razor in front of the camera. This violence against embodied (and sexualized) vision points not only to the notion of the eye as a misleading mimetic apparatus but also to the image of the eye as a hole or gap. The split eye is resignified as ocular replication, which, unexpectedly, triggers the proliferation of images and the loss of sight that come from seeing too much. Indeed, the swarm of eyes that populates Bataille’s visual imagery grimly alludes to the compulsion to watch violent acts to the point of blindness.²

Bataille’s ruminations on embodied vision underscore the perverse nature of violence as an object of contemplation that allures and repels, thus pointing to the difficulty of finding a form of

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approximation that could place the onlooker in a hypothetical neutral outside, beyond the forces of attraction and repulsion, revelation and blindness, that rule the production and reception of violent images. While Bataille attributes such paradoxical dynamics to the human condition and the contradictory logic of desire, other critics stress the historical correlation between the voyeuristic consumption of violent images and the society of spectacle brought about by modern capitalism and mass culture. According to the visual critic Ariella Azoulay, a spatial attitude toward horror is the basis for the ethics of the prosthetic modern gaze—a way of seeing expanded and transformed by the camera eye and perversely fixated on the suffering body and the corpse:

The body—wounded, mutilated, shot, beaten, disfigured, dying—is the very heart of the spectacle in the public sphere. It is the object of a desire to see, to see more, to blow up the body, to open it to the gaze, to penetrate into the body (corpse) and allow it to appear, to invite interiority to the surface of the screen (the screen as body and the body as screen). (78)

In the prosthetic structure of the gaze, film and photography are the most visible fields of symbolic production: in them the predicaments of the representation of violence and the body in pain are glaringly on display and, as the shocking opening scene from *Un chien andalou* demonstrates, the double edge of mimesis is staged over and over. The link between violence and photography exceeds the content of the image. According to Roland Barthes, the photograph itself is violent, not only because it may show violent things but mainly “because on each occasion it fills the sight by force, and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed” (*Camera* 91). Barthes’s emphasis on the primal drive of photography echoes a prevailing belief that we can never stand outside the frame of the image. In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag goes further when she argues that “[t]here is an aggression implicit in ev-

ery use of the camera” (7), suggesting that the act of shooting with a camera and capturing things and people, turning them into photographic images, comes from a modern desire to control the world through visualization.

In her timely, insightful, and, at times, exasperated book *Cruel Modernity* (2013), like Barthes and Sontag before her, Jean Franco grapples with the equivocal meaning of modern representations of violence and their capacity to inspire outraged condemnation and gleeful consumption. She opens her study on the uses of cruelty in Latin America’s recent history with a diatribe on the role of mass culture in what she sees as late modernity’s inexcusable lifting of the taboo on the public display and collective enjoyment of extreme violence. Today, she argues, cruelty is not only practiced by governments and criminal organizations but also “deeply embedded in fantasy life”: in comics, in video games, in literature and the visual arts, and in mass-media renditions of collective traumas and historical catastrophes. In Franco’s view, Quentin Tarantino’s films, “in which extreme cruelty is played for laughs”; Jonathan Littell’s sadistic novels; and the postapocalyptic devastation embraced by countless films and cable-television series take us “back to primitive states where violence was the necessary tool of survival.” The cause for indignation is not as much the depiction of violence as the encouragement of spectators and readers to vicariously enjoy violent acts against others. Although the exploitation of violence is not new, Franco concludes, “the acceptance and justification of cruelty and the rationale for cruel acts, have become a feature of modernity” (2). Whether or not we can read some of those fictions of cruelty in a more flexible, less condemnatory mode (by noticing, for example, Tarantino’s subversive use of counterfactual history), Franco persuasively calls our attention not only to the overwhelming use of violence against certain groups of people, including indigenous peoples, black slaves,

political dissidents, and women, throughout modern history, but also to the prickly question of libidinal investment in the suffering of others through and beyond representation.

In chapter 8 of *Cruel Modernity*, however, Franco invites us to consider another angle—how images can be used to denounce violence and its aftermath—when she shifts her focus from the problematic rapturous consumption and imitation of narrative or visual representations of cruelty to the evidentiary value and documentary force of photography and film in public and legal forums created to elucidate and judge human-rights violations, genocide, and, above all, forced disappearance. Disappearance is a form of cruelty systematically practiced by the military in Latin American countries that have endured civil wars and dictatorial regimes in the late twentieth century, including Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, and Colombia. Disappearance is a form of annihilation that exceeds death by preventing families from mourning the loss of their loved ones. To counter oblivion, some family members of the victims, such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, in Argentina, turned their despair into ritual public performances through which they made the disappeared spectrally visible by displaying photographs of the victims' past selves. In most cases the photographs were enlargements of the four-by-four pictures required by the state for identification purposes. Thus, paradoxically, what Allan Sekula calls the "juridical photographic realism" implemented by the modern state through its surveillance apparatuses to gather information about its citizens helps attest to the existence of the missing victims and resist their vanishing (5). Echoing the Chilean critic Nelly Richard, Franco stresses the link between the ghostliness of the bodies of the disappeared caught between life and death and the ghostly condition of their photographs, which record the spectral traces of an irreparable past. Franco closes her reflection on photographic

activism with a discussion of the forensic uses of photography as a discerning technological apparatus for identifying human remains in public exhumations and for gathering incriminating evidence against perpetrators of atrocities. But she points out that the dominant presence of foreign correspondents and photojournalists covering armed conflicts and recording the pain of others in "peripheral" regions of the globe once again brings to the fore the matter of spectatorship and the ethics of seeing (211–12).³ A set of questions must be asked: Who has the right to record or recount the past, and with what instrument or apparatus? How do we interpret the ambiguity in the relations between the photographer and the photographed? What kind of political, ethical, and affective responses will journalistic images of suffering elicit?

Franco's anxiety echoes recent debates about the limitations of photographic witnessing and the intolerable image. Like Sontag, Franco is concerned with the power of interpellation that photographs of atrocities have over us as onlookers. The idea that the reception of all photographic images is a subjective experience creates the notion of a humanistic gaze, which in the case of violent images is ethically underwritten by the idea of witnessing. Virtual witnessing, however, does not guarantee the right political or ethical response. There is no straight line from perception and affection to understanding and action (Rancière 103). As I discussed above, photography can make human misery an object of consumption or voyeuristic pleasure, averting any meaningful political response. There is also the risk of indifference or compassion fatigue. Just as trauma photographs can transfix, they can anesthetize. Insofar as visual technologies are an extension of human sight, they can function as prostheses and amputations. While they help expand the capabilities of the human perceptual apparatus, these technologies can also induce emotional and cognitive numbness in viewers

who are continuously exposed to the stream of disconnected images of pain saturating the media (Mitchell 237).

Theaters of Images: Framing Atrocity and Emancipation

We need . . . to grasp both sides of the paradox of the image: that it is alive—but also dead; powerful—but also weak; meaningful—but also meaningless.

—W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*

The question of authorship and the question of spectatorship are fundamental to understanding how images of cruelty signify. Who produced the images and with what purpose? What was the role of the victims portrayed? Who was the intended public? Who framed the images and made them circulate? In addressing these questions we discover that the spectacle of violence is not just a collection of horrifying images but also a political and social relation among people (photographers, political actors, editors, viewers, etc.), mediated by images. When we look at photographs, we are considering images that assert the indexical evidence of what they show while refusing to provide us with further insights about their meaning. Without captions or narrative contextualization, photographs remain silent, in a state of suspension. As Barthes states, by nature “the Photograph has something tautological about it” (*Camera* 5). In front of a photograph, we feel an “analogical plenitude . . . so great that the description of the photograph is literally impossible” (“Photographic Message” 18). Likewise, in spite of their inherent referentiality, photographs of atrocities are capable neither of describing what they picture nor of interpreting it. Photographic evidence can be made to speak only through discursive elements, when put into language. Thus, the referents of photographic images are to be found not in the images themselves but in the discourses that influence the way the images are read. To the unspecific evidence inherent in photography, evidence that always refers to

a singular moment of what has already been, discursive explanations specifying such a moment must be added so that photographs showing the suffering of others not only provoke an emotional response but also become intelligible (Wolf 83).

In this interweaving of photography and discourse, image and writing, we can find a long genealogy of artistic interventions proposing an ethics of seeing that complicates and counters the dominant systems of production, circulation, collection, and reception of photographic images depicting atrocities. This alternative circuit of photographic making creates multimedia projects that investigate both the failure of the images to represent traumatic events by themselves and the refusal of history to inscribe itself as a legible image. At the same time, the artists and photographers involved in these projects believe that the photograph’s unruliness may be used against the powers that control its movements and curtail its meaning. As John Tagg says, “[T]he image is always too big or too small for its frame, saying less than is wished for and more than is wanted” (14). In the gap produced by the “unfitness” of the photographic image, there is room for appropriation, resistance, and revolt, a space for the invention of collaborative theaters of images that seek to create the conditions for an emancipated spectator—a spectator who realizes that looking carefully can be a form of action and that interpreting the world is already a means of transforming it (Rancière 22).

The American photographer and artist Susan Meiselas’s multiyear archival photographic project on the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979, which keeps adjusting, testing, and measuring the impact of her photographs years after the events they depict took place, belongs to that alternative genealogy of photographic interventions (Lubben). From the beginning, Meiselas’s formal and editorial choices ignited controversy. For example, her decision to use color film instead of yielding

to the established visual conventions of photojournalists, who at the time shot war scenes exclusively in black-and-white, immediately brought about accusations of Third World war tourism and of the aestheticization of tragedy (Lippard 215). Meiselas, however, has never been oblivious to the political and ethical predicaments that face international photojournalists covering armed conflicts abroad. To counter the possibility of gratuitous voyeurism or exoticization, in her photobook *Susan Meiselas: Nicaragua* she carefully framed her photographs by inserting them in a historical narrative and by including maps, quotations, letters, and statistics to contextualize the images (Rosenberg). But although she has always been sensitive to the perils of decontextualization, Meiselas also rejects the notion that photographs have fixed meanings. In her work, the instability and openness of the image, its itinerant condition, has political potential, even revolutionary power. Photographs are things (archival remains, evidentiary proofs, artworks), but they are also performative artifacts triggering events (Taylor 233). In the last iteration of the Nicaragua project, the multimedia installation *Reframing History*, Meiselas returns to Nicaragua with mural-size copies of nineteen of the original pictures and locates them in the “same” spots where she originally took them. The short film (Meiselas, Guzzetti, and Rogers; 2004) that documents the return of the images to their lost spectral referents registers a disorienting but productive tension between the past and the present through the juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes and polyphonic testimonial voice-overs. By reshuffling and reformatting the original archive in collaboration with local institutions and citizens, Meiselas keeps the photographs of a violent past “alive” by weaving them into the expanding fabric and creative gaps of collective memory and intergenerational conversations. Contextualization and recontextualization through formatting and framing, together

with interviews and narrative testimonials, give Meiselas the tools to contain but also to transmute the violence in the image.

The Chilean-born installation artist Alfredo Jaar is also deeply concerned with the circulation and legibility of photographs picturing atrocities and with those images’ capacity to prompt their viewers to struggle against what causes such horror. His approach to the predicaments of representation in extreme cases of violence, however, works by image deprivation through veiling. In a complex critical dialogue with photojournalism, Jaar’s pieces usually withhold the images more than they display them. The logic behind this formal and ethical decision is twofold. On the one hand, by refusing to show, Jaar seeks to stem the deluge of images in contemporary global society and counter its leveling effect, which undermines our capacity to experience and understand the power and significance of photographs. As a result of overexposure, we cease to see. Photographs transfix us with their sensory power, but the indifference with which they record the real anesthetizes us. Too many images of massacres become the expression of just another spectacle, no different from those offered by horror films. On the other hand, Jaar removes the intolerable image for the opposite reason. In his view the spectacular glow that surrounds media images hides the fact that they are already veiled, continuously manipulated, edited, and censored by state apparatuses, social organizations, and media conglomerates. For Jaar the literal act of unveiling is not an option either, because, as Michelangelo Antonioni suspected, there is always another image under the revealed image (qtd. in Cardello 91).

Instead of showing images of atrocities, Jaar opts for using new mediums of representation to draw attention to the images’ invisibility and to restore their lost sight through language. To do so, he replaces photographs with ekphrastic and poetic texts, lit boxes, and bright screens to encourage new affective

and analytic forms of reception and dialogue. Jaar's series of works called *Lament of the Images* is paradigmatic of his artistic method. In the first version of the series, completed in 2002 and presented at the eleventh documenta exhibit in Kassel, Germany, Jaar created an architectural structure based on the tension between darkness and light, blindness and sight. In the first section of the structure, visitors walk through a darkened corridor containing three illuminated texts, written by the essayist and art critic David Levi Strauss, that refer to the absence and control of images depicting important historical events in South Africa, the United States, and Afghanistan. The first illuminated text alludes to the fact that there is no picture of Nelson Mandela weeping with joy at his liberation

because after his twenty-seven years of forced labor and imprisonment his eyes could no longer shed tears. The second refers to the lack of public access to satellite images of the war in Afghanistan, all of which have been copyrighted by the Pentagon (fig. 1). The last text discusses seventeen million photographs purchased by Bill Gates, which he plans to bury 220 feet underground. The second and final part of the structure is another dark space, a room containing a large screen from which a powerful white light emanates (fig. 2). The bright light literally blinds the viewers for a moment, exposing them to their true condition as blind to a world filled with scenes of devastation and muted excruciating pain. Essential to this final, luminous scene is the rite of passage through the corridor that turns

FIG. 1
From the art installation *Lament of the Images* (2002), by Alfredo Jaar. Illuminated text mounted on plexiglass light screen. Text by David Levi Strauss. Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

Kabul, Afghanistan, October 7, 2001.

As darkness falls over Kabul, the U.S. launches its first airstrikes against Afghanistan, including carpet bombing from B-52s flying at 40,000 feet, and more than 50 cruise missiles. President Bush describes the attacks as "carefully targeted" to avoid civilian casualties.

Just before launching the airstrikes, the U.S. Defense Department purchased exclusive rights to all available satellite images of Afghanistan and neighboring countries. The National Imagery and Mapping Agency, a top-secret Defense Department intelligence unit, entered into an exclusive contract with the private company Space Imaging Inc. to purchase images from their Ikonos satellite.

Although it has its own spy satellites that are ten times as powerful as any commercial ones, the Pentagon defended its purchase of the Ikonos images as a business decision that "provided it with excess capacity."

The agreement also produced an effective white-out of the operation, preventing western media from seeing the effects of the bombing, and eliminating the possibility of independent verification or refutation of government claims. News organizations in the U.S. and Europe were reduced to using archive images to accompany their reports.

The CEO of Space Imaging Inc. said, "They are buying all the imagery that is available." There is nothing left to see.

spectators into readers. To see, visitors must slow down the experience of reception and read the texts describing absent images. The reading enables the return of the missing photograph as a thinking image. Here Jaar echoes Barthes's conviction that "photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is pensive, when it thinks" (*Camera* 38). In this conceptual operation, the descriptive caption has become the photograph. The glowing white texts against the three symmetrical black boxes in the first part of the installation are not just the focal point but also the only source of light, which invites the spectator to approach. Writing both mourns the loss of images and resurrects them as writing and through writing. The large screen that closes the installation is a light-sensitive film on

which the viewers, or readers, can “develop” the mental images the texts have helped create in their minds.

Snapshots of Cuban History: Ekphrasis and the Pain of Others

[S]ome are born posthumously.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*

But the corpse, alas! kept on dying.

—César Vallejo, “Masa”

Literature has a fundamental role in Jaar’s work. Many of his installations are punctuated with lines from texts by famous writers and philosophers, such as the American poets Adrienne Rich and William Carlos Williams, the Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran, and the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. *Lament of the Images* takes its title from a magnificent poem by the Nigerian poet Ben Okri. In Briana Gervat’s reading, Jaar’s inclusion of poetry could be interpreted as an act of resistance to, if not rebellion against, stereotypical representations of atrocity. Words can conjure the intolerable image of pain, but they can also open it up to interpretation and affect. Their inclusion seems to reiterate Susan Sontag’s observation that “[l]iterature can train, and exercise, our ability to weep for those who are not us” (qtd. in Jaar, “Penetrating Epic Model”).

I would like to conclude with a brief examination of the ways in which the experimental text *Vista de amanecer en el trópico* (“View of Dawn in the Tropics”), by the Cuban writer and exile Guillermo Cabrera Infante (1929–2005), invites the reader to commiserate with a suffering other through a theater of images made exclusively of words. Although published in 1974, the text already reveals a preoccupation with the impact of the mass media

and the manipulation of trauma pictures in the context of a politics of memory and political contestation. While it speaks incessantly about them, the book contains no reproductions of visual images. But far from being iconoclastic, the text mimics the fragmentary logic of the photo album and the scrapbook. Organized as ekphrases of archival etchings, drawings, and photographs picturing killings, executions, and the scenes that precede and follow a violent event, the text illustrates, like a speaking picture book, the long and violent history of Cuba, seen by the author as the eternal return of the same disturbing afterimages. In contrast with collaborative projects such as the photobook *El infarto del alma* (“Soul’s Infarct” [1994]), by the photographer Paz Errázuriz and the writer Diamela Eltit, the phototextual dialogue performed by *Vista de amanecer en el trópico* is simultaneously reductive and expansive—that is, the reduction of image to word necessitates a proliferation of translation and interpretation. Cabrera Infante “quotes” and recycles

FIG. 2

Visitors to the art installation *Lament of the Images* (2002), by Alfredo Jaar. Photograph reproduced with the permission of the artist.



prints and photographs taken from the historical archive, bringing the past back to the present through images depicting atrocities and extreme political violence from the period of the Spanish conquest and colonization to the dictatorships of Gerardo Machado and Fulgencio Batista to the repressive policies implemented in postrevolutionary Cuba after 1968 that led to Cabrera Infante's exile. By selectively appropriating and rewriting the public archive, Cabrera links the movement of his ekphrastic translation to the collective work of memory and the reconstruction of the past through images that, notwithstanding their indexical force, are exposed to inevitable erasures and distortions.

As in Jaar's work, the overextended caption becomes the image itself. In the case of the photographs, the work of writing interrupts the arrest of time, putting the frozen image into motion and forcing the reader to witness the resurrection of the dead referent in the aporetic structure of a stretched instant. In Barthes's ontological interpretation of photography, the figure of the corpse is intrinsic to the indexical logic of photography: "the Photograph always carries its referent with itself, both affected by the same amorous or funereal immobility, at the very heart of the moving world: they are glued together, limb by limb, like the condemned man and the corpse in certain tortures" (*Camera* 5–6). In Cabrera Infante's theater of resurrected images, the referent is the phantom limb of a catastrophe. As in César Vallejo's poem "Masa," in *Vista* corpses keep on dying *ad aeternum* suspended in the temporal disjunctions brought about by historical trauma and political violence.

Cabrera Infante uses the conciseness and discontinuity of the fragment as a strategy to establish an archive of anonymous silenced voices and wounded and dead bodies, challenging the dominant, overarching narratives of imperial and national history. As part of that strategy, the text questions and refutes

the commodified image of the tropical paradise alluded to in the title and characteristic of the tourist postcard by gradually unveiling a genealogy of colonial and neocolonial violence against, and exploitation of, the island's most vulnerable populations, including its original native inhabitants, as well as the African slaves and poor peasants whose damaged bodies fed Cuba's agricultural economy.

The image of the dawn, an interval between night and day when things remain in a state of spectral indetermination, also has photographic connotations. We can read the inaugural description of the island in the first fragment, or vignette, as an example of photographic writing, in which language is a sort of chemical developer that makes the figure of the island emerge from the darkroom of the ocean:

Las islas surgieron del océano, primero como islotes aislados, luego los cayos se hicieron montañas y las aguas bajas, valles. Más tarde las islas se reunieron para formar una gran isla que pronto se hizo verde donde no era dorada o rojiza. Siguieron surgiendo las islitas, ahora hechas cayos, y la isla se convirtió en un archipiélago. (*Vista* 1)

The islands came out of the sea. First the isolated islets, then the cays became mountains and the lower waters, valleys. Later the islands came together until they formed a large island that soon would be green where it was not golden or reddish. Little islands kept rising, now turned into cays, and the island became an archipelago. (my trans.)

The last sentence of the vignette ("Ahí esta la isla, todavía surgiendo de entre el océano y el golfo: ahí está" "There is the island, still coming out from between the sea and the gulf. There it is' [*Vista* 1; *View* 1]) reverberates with the indexical force of photography, documenting the island's existence, its being there, its thingness. The spectral rise of the island out of the Caribbean Sea provides the

stage for the theater of performing images Cabrera Infante puts into motion.

In the epigraph that opens the book, the figure of the dawn also links the text to the intriguing caption that accompanies the Spanish painter and printmaker Francisco Goya's *Capricho 71*, "Si amanece, nos vamos" ("If the sun rises, we are leaving"), and implicitly to the subversive series of protophotographic drawings entitled *The Disasters of War* (1810–20), in which Goya decried the atrocities committed by the French and the Spaniards during Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. In this context, the beginning of the day not only marks the transition between light and darkness but also provides a stage for the theater of political cruelty, where the politics of death prevail over sanity and compassion and where the precariousness of life becomes manifest. Most of the photographs described by the narrator in *Vista de amanecer en el trópico* depict victims of executions and killings, whose unidentified photographed bodies remain suspended between life and death. Most of the victims are marginal and anonymous people, whose existence, however, has left a trace in the visual archive that Cabrera Infante's writing resurrects through descriptive denotation and temporal dislocation:

Lo único vivo es la mano. Al menos, la mano parece viva apoyada en el muro. No se ve el brazo y quizás la mano esté también muerta. Tal vez sea la mano de un testigo y la mancha en el muro es su sombra y otras sombras más. Abajo, medio metro abajo, está el césped quemado por el sol de Julio. . . . Ahora los senderos aparecen blanqueados, fulgurantes, por la luz. Un objeto que está cerca—una granada, el casquillo de una bala de cañon de alto calibre, ¿una cámara de cine?—se ve negro, como un hueco en la foto. En el sendero, sobre el césped, hay cuatro, no: cinco féretros, que son simples cajas de madera de pino (Parece que hay seis, pero ese ultimo átaud es la sombra del muro). Una de las cajas está medio abierta y tiene un

muerto en el suelo y en la caja más cercana el muerto, también afuera tiene puesto un brazo como reclamándola. . . . Arriba, a la izquierda, un gancho de hierro forjado se funde a los árboles negros y parece un signo. (*Vista* 123)

The only thing alive is the hand. In any case, the hand seems alive leaning on the wall. One can't see the arm and perhaps the hand is dead too. Perhaps it's the hand of an eyewitness and the spot on the wall is its shadow and other shadows as well. Below, half a yard below, the lawn is burnt by the July sun. . . . Now the paths seem bleached, shiny, from the sunlight. A nearby object—a grenade, the shell of a high-caliber cannon, a movie camera?—looks black, like a hole in the photograph. On the path all over the lawn, there are four—no, five—plain pinewood boxes. (There seem to be six, but that last coffin is the shadow of the wall). One of the boxes is half opened and there's a corpse in it, beside the nearest box there's another corpse, its arm hanging out, as if beckoning. . . . Above, to the left a wrought-iron hook blends in with the dark trees and looks like a sign. (*View* 78)

The meticulous but tentative reading of the photograph evokes a scene of devastation. Five, perhaps six, cheap coffins, some of them semiopened, reveal and hide their macabre contents. The ambiguous hand that opens the description as the first indexical enigma (is it dead or alive? in what present?) is echoed by the "wrought-iron hook" that mimics a question mark at the end of the vignette. In the written photograph, everything is certain and everything can be something else. What we do know is that we face the neglected aftermath of a scene of extreme violence: forgotten lives and deaths in the invisible interstices of history.

The remnants of injustice and violence exceed the boundaries of the national archive. In Cabrera Infante, the Borgesian notion of the archive as an aporetic artifact, according to which a particular image of violence contains *in potentia* all possible images of atrocity, explains why Cabrera Infante included

in the series of historical snapshots a famous itinerant photograph, originally located in a foreign transnational archive. Taken by Robert Capa during the Spanish Civil War, the photograph shows a Republican soldier who is shot and dies at the moment when Capa shoots his camera. In one of his most remarkable photo readings, Cabrera Infante rewrites the famous photograph of the soldier falling for eternity as “Cuban”:

[E]stá cayendo detrás de la loma: el brazo gris levantado sin ira contra el cielo blanco donde hay un sol más blanco que no se ve ahora, la mano gris, el antebrazo gris oscuro, el rifle negro junto, pegado, fundido al pecho gris pálido con la mancha negra a un lado, sin dolor ni sorpresa porque no le dieron tiempo, sin conocer que cae sobre la hierba negra, sin saber nunca que lo verán una y otra vez, así, que no ha caído todavía pero que está cayendo porque un hombro negro, el pantalón negro-gris-negro . . . el cuello gris, la cara gris-gris, todo el costado izquierdo gris-negro está borroso, está borrándose y borrado se inclina a la tierra negra y a la muerte para siempre: no se oyó la descarga ni el último disparo pero se siente el impacto y caerá en tanto exista el hombre y lo verán cayendo sin caer jamás cuando lo miren los ojos y no lo olvidarán mientras haya memoria. (Vista 169)

He is falling behind the hill: the grey arm raised without anger against the white sky where there's a whiter sun which you now can't see, the grey hand, the dark grey forearm, the black rifle next to, stuck to, fused with the pale-grey chest with the black stain on one side, without pain or surprise because they didn't give him time, without knowing that he's falling on the black grass, without ever knowing that they'll see him fall again and again, like this, he hasn't yet fallen but he is falling because a black shoulder, the black-grey-black pants . . . the grey neck, the grey grey face, the whole grey-black left side is going, fading, vanishing, leaning toward the black earth and death for ever: the volley or the single shot wasn't heard but the impact is

felt and he will fall as long as man exists and they will see him falling without ever falling when eyes look at him and they will not forget him as long as there is memory. (View 118)

In this magnificent ekphrastic passage, Cabrera Infante's uninterrupted writing animates the specter of Capa's infamous falling soldier, who returns from the dead to lend his Icarian body and its eternal fall to all the victims of the follies of war and the sleep of reason.

NOTES

1. The dictionary was published serially in *Documents*, an art magazine Bataille edited in 1929–30.

2. Indeed, in the dictionary entry for *eye*, a revolting profusion of eyes is followed by a scene of enucleation, in which, while preparing himself for his public execution by guillotine, a condemned man removes one of his eyes from its socket and gives it to a priest.

3. Photography continues to be an important medium in framing the worlds of distant, exotic, and suffering others. Throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, photojournalism has been the main visual genre in news-media framing of international affairs and the main creator of geopolitical ways of seeing that combine humanistic and imperial perspectives (Kennedy and Patrick 1–6). In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag considers that being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience, “the cumulative offering by more than a century and a half's worth of those professional, specialized tourists known as journalists” (18).

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theories and
methodologies

Cruel Coloniality; or, The Ruse of Sovereignty

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[A] historical narrative is not a seamless curve toward the present but the broken remains that are buried and waiting for their resurrection.

[M]emory is not a holdall that can be drawn on as needed but constantly has to be reconstructed from fragments and fortuitous remains. Memory of atrocity is not simply available but is constituted post hoc with the aim not only of clarifying the fate of the disappeared but of documenting a crime.

—Jean Franco, *Cruel Modernity*

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE AND MEMORY: THE FORMER IS USUALLY THE SITE OF POWER; THE LATTER, FOR JEAN FRANCO IN *CRUEL MODERNITY*,

is the site of force. Historical narrative represents Latin American nations as emerging—or, in Brazil's case, emerged—markets progressing on a seamless curve toward a glossy, technologically sophisticated, communicative hypermodernity, whereas memory is the desperate, slow, brute force of the people who refuse to forget the unmitigated cruelty of the second half of the twentieth century in Latin America. Memory here is the continental but subaltern force of family and friends who are still noisily waiting to bury the broken remains of their disappeared sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, comrades in hope or children of a utopic vision. Forensic subaltern memories document the phantasmagoric crimes committed against fragmented and maimed bodies, buried in mass graves or in the depths of lakes from Patagonia to the border between Mexico and the United States, interrupting the gleaming historical narratives that describe the slow but steady progress toward national development. In *Cruel Modernity*, Franco is part of this force: she is a forensic memory worker, examining the crime scenes, the tortured, raped, mutilated bodies, describing in awful detail who did what to whom, with what instruments, and in what order. One of the most striking aspects of *Cruel Modernity* is Franco's refusal to look away. Each chapter provides "thick description" of these crimes, as Franco tries to comprehend the excess of the acts perpetrated, the motivations of the perpetrators, the effects on the victims. Several rationales

surface from Franco's analysis—economic, psychoanalytic, patriarchal, misogynist—but these are always necessarily insufficient, especially for Franco. She never fully answers the question she poses: Why were these crimes so cruel, so excessively enacted on the bodies of victims whose actions could never warrant such treatment? These crimes cannot be rendered rational, and perhaps, according to Franco, they should not be. What remains in the face of an impossibility to account for the cruelty is the description, the forcefully documented refusal to forget.

After reading this thick description of the crimes—the profiles of the victims, the methods employed by the perpetrators, the obliterating effect of these methods, the evident sanctioning of them by national leaders and their military regimes—I began to wonder if the book had not been misnamed, if its proper title might not be “Cruel Colonialism.” Franco frequently describes these crimes as reminiscent of colonial practices: with modifying wording such as “underlying” the crimes, she writes, “were the habits and attitudes of conquest”; it seemed “[a]s if the conquest were still going on” (Franco 45, 5). However, what if the relation between these cruel practices and colonialism was more than just that of analogy (as if, like) or custom (habits, attitudes) and was instead structural and abiding? What if these massacres, mutilations, rapes, and disappearances expressed a continuing “coloniality of power” ‘colonialidad del poder’ that we have been too quick to label “modern”?¹ Literary critics and historians, in our love of periodization, have perhaps drawn too bright a line between colonialism and modernity, between divine right and secular thought, between imperialism and nationalist liberty. In “History Hesitant,” the cultural critic Lisa Lowe argues instead that liberalism, the hallmark of modernity, did not so much contradict slavery, indenture, dispossession, and colonialism as provide the rhetorical and political strategies

for managing and administering continuing modes of exploitation and domination (90). Lowe is one of several scholars who have begun to trace the origins of modern liberalism to the practices and legal principles of European colonialism in the Americas rather than to an Enlightenment developed strictly in Europe.² These scholars have teased out the philosophical and historical imbrications of freedom with genocide and of slavery with equality, causing me to ask whether colonialism ever really stopped or just proliferated its administrative and rhetorical repertoire.³

To ask this question is not mere pedantry. Rather, Franco's motivating question leads to my own. *Cruel Modernity* seeks to explain why Latin American armies, police, paramilitary forces, and rural patrols practiced extreme cruelty when killing and disappearing “subversives” during the second half of the twentieth century. Why inflict extravagant forms of torture on a person in a detention center once the perpetrators had extracted information or, more often, when other sources had already given them all the information they needed? Furthermore, why disembowel, decapitate, rape, burn alive, and otherwise mutilate the entire population of indigenous villages? If the militaries' plan was to kill the targeted population, to “drain the sea” in which the guerrilla armies metaphorically swam, why expend so much energy to punish them in such extraordinary ways, obliterating the victims' humanity before death, rendering them prostrate in their submission? The uniformity and longevity of these practices across the Americas as analyzed by Franco—from the 1932 massacre of leftists and indigenous peasants in El Salvador through the 1970s dirty wars of the Southern Cone to the 1980s counterinsurgencies in Central America and Peru—suggest that they were not the result of rogue actors or even rogue states. Rather, these extreme acts of cruelty were a purposeful demonstration of power, indicating the transnational reach of these Latin

American reactionary regimes backed by the United States. The practices involved an intentional wasting of victims' bodies, before and after death, a wasting that unnerves the reader and appears irrational to the modern citizen. Suspending the question of whether or not human wasting is useful to modernity, let us consider what political system does need such wasteful deaths as evidence of its power. European colonialism in the Americas required not only extravagant submission to its political and religious regime but also the repeated spectacle of mutilated indigenous bodies as a tool for instilling proper discipline in the surviving population, a tool that remains in use today.

Instead of allowing the presumptive free will practiced by Rousseau's natural man when he entered the social contract,⁴ colonial Spain explicitly demanded submission to Crown and church from *los naturales* with the *Requerimiento*, a declaration of sovereignty over the Americas.⁵ The original *Requerimiento*, issued in 1513, explained that popes descended from Saint Peter, to whom God gave the responsibility of ruling the world to bring heathens into Christianity, and that the current pontiff had thus legitimately "made donation of these isles and Tierra-firme to the aforesaid King and Queen" of Castile.⁶ It then explained that "some islands, and indeed almost all those to whome this has been notified, have received and served their Highnesses . . . with good will" and that the Crown continues to

ask and require you that you consider what we have said to you, and that you take the time that shall be necessary to understand and deliberate upon it, and that you acknowledge the Church as Ruler and Superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Doña Juana our lords, in his place as superiors . . . and that you consent and give place that these religious fathers should declare and preach to you the aforesaid [Christianity].

If you do so, you will do well . . . and we in their name shall receive you in all love and charity, and leave you, your wives, and your children, and your lands, free without servitude, that you may do with them and yourselves freely that which you like and think best. . . .

But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, . . . with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and children, and shall make slaves of them . . . and we shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey . . . and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.

(López de Palacios Rubios)

The indigenous peoples' freedom to do with themselves and their lands as they please is paradoxically contingent on their complete submission to God, the pope, the king and queen of Castile, and all the conquistadores and priests who come to the New World in the name of Petrine responsibility. That this submission must be complete is underscored by the consequences of not submitting: those who delay shall be subject to "all the mischief and damage" the Spaniards can inflict, in "all ways and manners" imaginable and unimaginable. Indigenous refusal makes women and children slaves, with all the violation therein implied. The ultimate sign of indigenous peoples' degradation is that all "the deaths and losses" at the hands of the conquistadores will be, unequivocally, the fault of the Indians themselves. The conquistadores are free to commit cruel acts; in fact, they are required to do so by God, and their consciences may remain innocent of wrongdoing.

Three principles of this colonial ethos were carried forward to the dirty wars of the twentieth century: the requirement for complete sub-

mission, the godly duty of soldiers to unleash untold cruelties in producing this submission where it is absent, and the absolute impunity of those who commit these cruelties. These acts by the militaries and paramilitaries in twentieth-century Latin America were meant to annihilate any vestige of bodily, personal, or political sovereignty resting with the individual in producing submission to the regime. The mantra of the post-World War II Latin American Left was “I would rather die on my feet than live on my knees,” yet these cruel acts ensured that victims died not on their feet but groveling for mercy in their own blood and excrement. Though it was presumably the Maoist and Leninist guerrillas the militaries and paramilitaries were after, the victims were rarely guerrillas, who had the weapons to ensure they died on their feet in battle. Instead, the militaries and death squads targeted the unarmed communities of dissent and hope: members of guerrilla urban-support systems, certainly, but most frequently members of any civil institution that challenged the status quo: unionists, priests and nuns, activist university students, even doctors and nurses committed to the treatment of the poor and working classes. Female members of these groups were available for sexual enslavement, as this humiliation epitomized the annihilation of the personal refusal to submit. Moreover, the inability of the unarmed to defend the virtue of “their women” was intended to humiliate the entire community. Anyone who failed to demonstrate complete submission to a transnational vision of proper economic and political dominion—including democratically elected presidents—was subject to annihilation. And this annihilation had to be spectacular because it was meant to be exemplary, to vanquish any expression of political dissent or effort to enact change. Thus, while thousands of Latin Americans were lost to nameless graves, it was critical that many bodies be found—by the side of a road, on a university campus—prominently displaying the marks of their final submission.

While members of the white and mestizo middle classes were the targets of torture and disappearance in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, the vast majority of the victims of government-sanctioned cruelty were the continent’s indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women and children. Tens of thousands of civilians were killed in the Southern Cone, but hundreds of thousands of Indians were killed in Peru and Guatemala. Franco devotes particular attention to these massacres in *Cruel Modernity*, as entire villages were razed at the hands of special forces and rural guards, who practiced particular forms of degradation: the routine killing of babies, the systematic rape of women, the dismemberment, beheading, and burning of bodies before and after death. The rank-and-file perpetrators of these crimes were often indigenous men who were forcibly recruited to the paramilitary and military forces as part of a counterinsurgency strategy. Franco analyzes accounts of these massacres, documented by the Peruvian and Guatemalan truth commissions, and provides the reader with a keen feminist and racial analysis, theorizing the way power—masculinist, patriarchal power and racial power—was acquired by soldiers through the performance of this cruelty on the body of the other. Possession of territory was accomplished through these killings as well, since the razed villages were literally cleared of ostensible communist contagion. It is in her chapters on indigenous massacres in Peru and Guatemala that Franco is most often struck by the resemblance between the practices of the colonial conquest and those of the late twentieth century. The similarity in the scale and nature of the cruelty inflicted on indigenous peoples in these two periods, however, is not coincidental. Rather, it signals the ongoing coloniality of power. Any evidence of indigenous refusal in the twentieth century—of indigenous people’s refusal to continue in subjugation and exploitation as a racial class—required

immediate and absolute annihilation, delivered with the most “mischief” and “damage” the special forces and rural guards could muster. Their behavior was not *like* colonial conquest; it *was* colonial conquest by another name, since the purpose of this spectacular performance of power was to maintain the hierarchy of exploitation required by the global practice of racial capitalism. For every village razed in such a fashion, dozens of others repressed their dissent and quieted any vision of an alternative future free of the continued dispossession of their land and labor.

The Guatemalan truth commission documented several cases in which indigenous victims were forced to eat human flesh, their own or another's. The soldiers inflicting this punishment regularly consumed human flesh as well, eating their victims as part of their army training. Franco analyzes the meaning of these acts for the reader, reminding us that the Spanish colonial administration often charged indigenous peoples with cannibalism as proof of their savagery (52–53). However, in cases where both victim and perpetrator ate human flesh, Franco concludes, “we confront the literal interpretation [of cannibalism] as, in a curious reversal, the army takes on the savagery they attribute to the enemy while forcing their prisoners to behave like cannibals” (53). While Franco surmises that for the flesh-eating and flesh-peddling soldiers “to be manly was to be savage,” this is one of those moments in *Cruel Modernity* when she is stymied in her attempt to comprehend the excessiveness and expressiveness of cruelty. I will try to step into the breach and offer further interpretation, not as a way to fully explain these acts in some positivist sense but rather as a speculative effort at bridging the temporal gap between modernity and colonialism.

Cannibalism was one of a series of grievous sins that required swift retribution from the Spanish conquistadores cum good Samaritans. The others were sodomy, idolatry, bestiality, and incest. In *Sodometries: Renais-*

sance Texts, Modern Sexualities, Jonathan Goldberg theorizes the role that the figure of sodomy played in the work of conquest by revisiting the account of Vasco Núñez de Balboa's massacre of forty Quarequa nobles who were presumed to be sodomites because of their effeminate carriage and love for one another. Not only were the men killed, their bodies were quartered and fed to the conquistadores' dogs. The scene is even recorded in a famous 1594 engraving by the Danish painter Theodor de Bry, entitled “Balboa Setting His Dogs upon Indian Practitioners of Homosexuality.” Goldberg underscores that the killing of these forty men was gratuitous, since Balboa's army had killed six hundred Quarequa warriors, including the king, just two days before this event. The Quarequa had already been conquered, in other words. According to the Spanish documentation of the massacre, other members of the Quarequa people had alerted Balboa to the practices of the forty nobles. Thus, Goldberg argues that the killing of the sodomites advanced the colonial mission by allowing the conquistadores to sort good Indians (the native informants presumably speaking for the surviving Quarequa Indians) from bad (the sodomitic elite). It also allowed the conquistadores to represent themselves as the agents of liberation, freeing the good, common Indians from the oppressive sodomitical practices of their leaders and bringing Spaniards into identification with these surviving Indians through the recognition of mutually agreed-on sinful practices. Goldberg also contends that the killing of the sodomites was represented as a quasi-democratic endeavor, because the rank-and-file soldiers who committed the massacre were made equal with their officers in abhorring sodomy, while remaining rigidly divided from them by rank.

Throughout the counterinsurgencies in Guatemala and Peru, special forces and rural patrols repeatedly represented their cruel practices against indigenous peoples as liberation, as the restoration of the indigenous

community's proper submission to democratic principles. The cannibalism documented by the Guatemalan truth commission similarly represented liberation and equality for the perpetrators, staging group identifications and differentiations through the cut and defiled bodies of their victims. The indigenous villagers forced to eat human flesh were made into bad Indians, enacting their division from the good Indian soldiers through the literal division of their sinful flesh. They enact this division for the larger community of soldiers, who understood the torture as liberating the nation from contamination by bad Indians who refused to submit. But what of the good Indians who formed the rank and file of the Guatemalan special forces, who devoured the bad Indians who were devouring themselves? Through cannibalism, good Indian soldiers were simultaneously brought into identification with and were differentiated from the mestizo and white soldiers and officers in their ranks. By devouring bad Indians for their superiors, they proved their willingness to devour the bad-Indian contagion in themselves, the indigenous contagion that always threatens to pollute the nation with the refusal to submit. For what better proof of the loyal, abject submission of these Indian soldiers than their willingness to perform this most egregious act? But the act of eating flesh—of behaving like a savage Indian—also reinforced the indigenous soldiers' difference from their superiors in race, class, and rank by reiterating their Indian particularity for the nation of soldiers to behold. Just as the colonial prohibition against cannibalism reflected Spaniards' past cannibalistic practices, in the modern cannibalistic practices soldiers and victims were made to mirror each other; by violating this prohibition, the soldiers and victims enacted the I-am-like-you-I-am-not-like-you paradox that was fundamental to the practice of conquest in both the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

It was the national profile of the military dictatorships that gave these acts their modern sheen. First, the militaries and paramilitaries represented their counterinsurgency tactics as liberating the nation from the foreign contaminant of communism and as ensuring the continued development of capitalist democracy (that shiny “curve toward the present” [Franco 36]). Second, as Franco points out, the repetitive, barbaric nature of the acts required high-level training in the techniques of torture, as well as the inculcation of an inhumane discipline that would allow the militaries to perpetrate them. In other words, the cruelty had a modern method that could only have been instilled by national military institutions. Indeed, these militaries, Franco makes clear, understood their practices, involving studied psychological techniques and electronic equipment, as the sign of their national modernity (17). However, Franco notes, these separate national militaries received their training together, from military and intelligence officers at the United States Southern Command. The Central Intelligence Agency provided its notorious manuals with instructions on surveillance and interrogation, including the methods classified as torture by the Geneva Convention, to all these militaries and special forces.⁷ Military dictatorships fashioned themselves the defenders of national sovereignty and may even have believed sovereignty's ruse, but their cruel practices were transnational in scope and execution.

Goldberg analyzed Peter Eden's 1555 English translation of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *De orbe novo* (“The New World”; 1516) to underscore his argument that colonialism was a joint European venture. Eden's translation was meant to instruct the British on the best methods of conquest. Despite colonial rivalries, the colonality of power was a transnational endeavor to bring indigenous peoples in the Americas into proper and absolute submission to European dominion. The

dirty wars of the second half of the twentieth century were a transnational effort as well, to bring Latin America back into submission by demonstrating the costs of not submitting on the bodies of those who dared to dissent, who dared to imagine. In the midst of these horrendous dirty wars, the ideological divide between capitalism and communism distracted leftists from the global impact of these cruel practices, which was the repossession of the entire continent and its peoples for the deeper penetration of capitalist development. These practices literally and figuratively cleared the ground for neoliberal expansion, so that today even the most left-leaning governments in Latin America must believe in free trade, must champion the rights of transnational extractive industries, and must rewrite their constitutions to welcome maquiladoras to their “sovereign” territories.

Recognizing the cruel colonialism at the heart of modernity forces us to reconceptualize our temporality, to free ourselves from the ruse of sovereignty and from our blind faith in the liberatory powers of modernization. This ruse begins with the founding of that most modern of institutions, international law, by the sixteenth-century Spanish jurist and theologian Francisco de Vitoria. The legal scholar Antony Anghie has argued that international law did not precede colonialism—as most legal scholars contend—but instead that Vitoria “reconceptualizes . . . existing doctrines or else invents new ones to deal with [the] novel problem” of the indigenous populations in the New World (322). From Vitoria’s 1532 lectures *De Indis noviter inventis* (“The Newly Discovered Indies”) and *De jure belli* (“On the Law of War”), it is clear to Anghie that “colonialism and international law, cultural difference and sovereignty” came into being together to mediate relations between Europeans and these seemingly new peoples (322). Vitoria is considered a great defender of indigenous humanity, but Anghie brings out the darker side of the jurist’s universal hu-

manism through a careful analysis of Vitoria’s argumentation. In *De Indis* Vitoria argued not only that indigenous people possessed reason but also that they were not subject to divine law. Because papal authority did not extend to the New World, Vitoria insisted, indigenous peoples could not be dispossessed of their freedom, property, or territory for non-belief. Indigenous peoples and the Spaniards, so culturally different and geographically estranged, needed to be brought under one binding jurisdiction. Anghie argues that Vitoria resolved this problem by extending reason to indigenous peoples, thereby universalizing it, subjecting all peoples, but especially indigenous peoples, to a reinvented secular law. By possessing reason, indigenous people were capable of understanding the exigencies of secular natural law and, ipso facto, established the new global reach of that law for Vitoria.

Vitoria, Anghie contends, proceeded to establish the universal character of natural law on the basis of the particularity of Spanish custom and the exigencies of Spanish colonialism. Vitoria especially insisted that secular natural law established the freedoms of travel and commerce, such that the Indians must respect the right of the Spaniards to travel among them, “importing thither wares which the natives lack and . . . exporting thence either gold or silver or other wares of which the natives have in abundance” (qtd. in Anghie 326). Anghie underscores that the relationship between Spaniards and Indians is represented as reciprocal even though, one paragraph later, Vitoria affirms that “it is certain that the aborigines can no more keep off the Spaniards from trade than Christians can keep off other Christians” (qtd. in Anghie 326). In *De jure belli*, Anghie explains, Vitoria can then argue that indigenous peoples’ refusal to allow Spanish “ambassadors” to trade and to proselytize among them was a violation of Spanish sovereignty and grounds for just war against them (327–28). The universal dominion of modern international law is

established through the coloniality of power: colonialism requires the universalization of free trade as a human right, one that permits some sovereign nations to freely violate the sovereignty of others through war. Over and over, coloniality establishes Native Americans as reasonable, but not reasonable enough to comprehend these universal norms.

Cruelty and violence: Jean Franco never confuses the two. She is doggedly interested only in cruelty, and what her book shows us is that the pursuit of cruelty makes violence palatable by comparison. Better the mundane, everyday violence of capitalist exploitation and dominion than the unbearable cut of colonial cruelty. Better to submit than to refuse. This is certainly the course that Latin America seems to have taken since the end of the revolutionary era. Critics, including me, were perhaps too quick to blame the revolutionary imagination for its failure, when we should have taken the long view and given colonialism credit for its own continued success. However, as Franco makes clear, forensic memory workers are tireless, and the prolific documentation of this cruelty by subaltern classes is also a resounding refusal. Their forensic memories, documented in *Cruel Modernity*, are the “fortuitous remains” of the call to refuse (203).

be progressively overcome but the perfect expression of radical equality and freedom. As an early critic of Enlightenment reason and modernity, Rousseau was a precursor to current decolonial theorists.

5. *Los naturales* (“the natural ones”) was a designation given to the Indians by the Spanish Crown. Though the meaning of *naturales* fluctuated over the span of Spanish colonialism, it always maintained a double valence. While *naturales* designated indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants and therefore owners of their territories, it also implied that they existed in a state of nature, having never been exposed to Christianity. Adorno analyzes *naturales* throughout Spanish colonialism.

6. The jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubios wrote the first version of the *Requerimiento* for the Council of Castile, of which he was a member. The document was issued in response to the protests of the priests accompanying the conquistadores, who argued to the Spanish Crown that it was unjust to enslave or dispossess indigenous inhabitants of the New World, because they were not subject to the laws governing just war against Moors, Jews, and other nonbelievers from the Old World. Since they had never been exposed to Christ, indigenous peoples could not be subjected to just war on the basis of their nonbelief. Such was the moral weight these priests carried with the Crown that Spain developed this document to quickly instruct the pagans on the precepts of Christianity and to ask them to come over to the faith willingly. It was to be read to the indigenous peoples before the conquistadores executed any wars against them.

7. See, for example, the declassified Central Intelligence Agency manuals (United States, “Human Resource Exploitation” and “KUBARK”). For further discussion of Central Intelligence Agency training of Central American counterinsurgency forces in the techniques of torture, see Cockburn; Dillon; Dickey.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of coloniality of power, see Mignolo; Quijano.

2. Anghie; Goldberg; Gross; Harris; Kazanjian; Onuf; Ruskola; Saldaña-Portillo; Williams.

3. For a discussion of these two forms of imbrication, see Goldberg; Onuf.

4. While Rousseau is the philosopher most closely associated with the republican principles of his day, when he published *The Social Contract* in 1762 it was intended as a critique of French civil society, the cult of reason, and philosophers like John Locke, whose interpretations of natural man Rousseau found incorrect. For Rousseau natural man was not an early stage of civilized man to

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Jean Franco, in Her Own Words: An Interview

JEAN FRANCO AND
MARÍA JOSEFINA
SALDAÑA-PORTILLO

María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo: Why did you write this book?

Jean Franco: It was something I thought about for a long time, because I suppose I lived through that period when everything you heard from Latin America was a story of gore, right? I wanted to somehow investigate this, find out what was producing it. It's not as though Latin America is any more gory than anyplace else. How is it that in Chile in 1973, all of a sudden people emerge who are going to kill all these other people and throw them in the river? In Guatemala—anybody could be murdered.

JS: And successful, elected governments in Guatemala and Chile were overthrown, which makes it more inexplicable in a way.

JF: That's true, because it was a very particular kind of period, a large chunk of the twentieth century. I don't think you can get around it. And a lot of the most brilliant people in Latin America disappeared or were killed or sent into a situation of impossibility. They couldn't move. It happened to people I knew. That is really what drew me into the material. I was personally involved in some way. I felt guilty. Here I am in the United States with a comfy academic job while people are being killed and disappeared. There was a disparity between me and them.

JS: You try to explain the motivation for the crimes as, in part, a mixture of misogyny and patriarchal power, but even you aren't entirely convinced. I actually thought it was intellectually honest to not commit to a rational explanation.

JF: I could have gone into more detail about motivations, but it is difficult material, so I didn't go deeply enough into some of the things that promote this situation. It's a situation in which you have to have permission to commit atrocities; so it's when this permission comes that people are able to profit, people who would otherwise be quite docile citizens, who wouldn't think of doing anything bad, but who do bad things once they get permission. It's the idea of permission; everybody is being nice and citizenly, and the moment

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comes in which they could have more power, and they could do something, so they do something. It is what I would like to write about now.

JS: It is a difficult task because all the perpetrators were given amnesty. They had to confess their crimes, but they didn't have to explain themselves. The more I read, the more I thought, "Have we been wrong in placing so much emphasis on the analysis of modernity over the last 150 years; is the situation in Latin America more like cruel colonialism?" Especially given the methods that the perpetrators employed, and what you just said—they were given permission to do what they did. No one was ever given greater permission to commit atrocities than the conquistadores in the colonial era; they were given permission by God! And you talk about how these people assumed a kind of godly power. I felt that both their methods and the effect of what they did were colonial. When we were in that extended period, it wasn't clear what the goal of all this torture was.

JF: It was a sort of solipsistic goal. It was about "my satisfaction" at least in part.

JS: "My satisfaction, my control, my pleasure." In the aftermath of all these wars, though, what really happened? The further dispossession of all these people who barely possessed anything. The targets of all this violence, women and the indigenous, were also the targets of the conquest, and so part of me thought, "Is this the manner in which colonialism continues?" Guatemala was such a brutal case. I was stunned by your bravery. I remember reading the report by the Guatemalan truth commission when I was finishing my first book. Everything was twice as bad as we'd imagined during the war: instead of two hundred villages razed, there were four hundred; instead of 100,000 people killed, 200,000, eighty percent of them indigenous. I was laid out flat by the report. There was a

compulsion to keep reading it even though I didn't need it for the book, but it rendered me incapable of doing anything.

JF: The worst thing for me wasn't reading the reports; the worst thing was experiencing the stuff that made me write *Cruel Modernity*. I couldn't believe it. It was probably more shocking for me than for most people in Latin America, who probably were familiar with it, but for me, it was a brain turner. I came from England—you know, "blah, blah, blah, . . . the gentility of England." I went to Guatemala by sea, on a boat. And we arrived at Puerto Barrios, on the Atlantic coast. It was the most amazing thing to me. You arrive on the Guatemalan coast, and there is no road from the coast to the capital city in the center. There's no road! There is a train owned by the United Fruit Company, so we took the train, which was really amazing because we were going through this feudal countryside, really feudal! And we get to Guatemala City, to the capital city, where I lived for twelve months, and at the end of twelve months, there is a coup. I go there during the Arbenz regime, and then there is a coup.

JS: Did you go as a graduate student or as an activist?

JF: No, I went as a wife to a Guatemalan. To Juan Antonio Franco, who was a painter. And so the people I dealt with were the people at the Casa de la Cultura. That was the center of all our activities. So that's how I got into it. I had no idea what I was confronting. No idea.

JS: You arrived to this thriving civil society and a really effervescent, exciting cultural and intellectual scene.

JF: Well, yes, it was a total shock when this kind of reversal came about. You expect in the beginning something great, and then everything turns around. Your friends are in

jail; you're rushing into Mexico to get away from it all.

JS: You were going into exile.

JF: But wait a minute. The strangest thing was the month just before the coup, because all kinds of strange people came through Guatemala, noticeably, and this one guy, this very engaging American guy, came through, and we had dinner with him, and he talked about how thrilled he was to be there, and then the day of the coup he disappeared over the frontier to Mexico. He'd been a sort of spy the whole time. I was totally naive, totally European in my outlook. It was a total shock to me; I couldn't believe it. How can people be like this, be so dishonest?

JS: I am sure he named names; he was in your circles. I imagine that was what he was sent there to do.

JF: Absolutely, absolutely, but it was very humiliating as well, because I didn't know anything.

JS: There must be some sense of humiliation in being that terrified, because you and your husband must have been terrified trying to flee.

JF: Well, for my son, Alex. Because when the planes came over, before the invasion, at the end of the Arbenz phase—you know these houses are totally open; there's no roof, they're not closed, they're open—you're sitting on your patio, and planes are coming over. It was amazing. And my good friend during all that time was Alaíde Foppa de Solórzano. An amazing person because she was very aristocratic, in some sense, but also very left. So I used to go and stay with her during this time when everyone was afraid and waiting. I would stay with her, and she was wonderful, absolutely wonderful. She came from this aristocratic family, very refined, very beautiful. It is very difficult to think of that now. So we used to sit and com-

fort each other during the coup. I would like to write about Alaíde because she was from the upper class of Guatemala yet was still sequestered and killed by the government because of her political views. The elite were not spared by the government if, like Alaíde, they were taking the side of the indigenous. She was aristocratic in her bearing, absolutely honest, and very much an activist.

JS: So how long were you there after the coup began?

JF: Six months, because you couldn't easily get out; you had to have an exit permit, and I remember standing in the line for the exit permit, and there was this guy behind me, very fidgety, and he asked if I spoke English, and I said yes, and he was the Manchester *Guardian* correspondent [laughs]. He was pretty frantic. That particular moment of panic, Joan Didion describes it very well, that moment when all the foreigners wanted to get out.

JS: Though perhaps not by design, the effect of these dirty wars has been the much deeper penetration of capitalist development in Latin American countries.

JF: They all seem to be totally in *servidumbre* [servitude] now. The dirty wars created the mood of being subservient.

JS: That was the other thing that made me think of cruel coloniality, because the Spanish Crown demanded subservience, complete submission to Christianity, to the Crown.

JF: Also because the situation hit the lower classes, who are obviously indigenous, more than other classes.

JS: Or their *mestizaje* is one remove from indigeneity.¹ The other thing I wanted to ask you about is why, in every single chapter, you couple your analysis of the truth-commission reports with analyses of novels, artwork, and

films. Was that combination necessary to the material? Why that combination?

JF: Any more scientific approach would have been totally inadequate. The social sciences are totally corrupt, and they don't liberate themselves at all from the corruption, especially in these countries. It's very difficult to include the social sciences in any innovative approaches to these things, and that's why I don't trust them.

JS: Your literary analysis illustrates the impossibility of capturing the experience of this cruelty through any other means. You stage the crisis of this really well.

JF: That was my idea.

NOTE

1. The term *mestizaje* is difficult to translate. The word in Latin American colonial history signifies so much more than the direct translation—miscegenation—would imply. Miscegenation participates in an Anglo-American colonial history of segregation and racial violence that does not correspond with the term *mestizaje* in Spanish colonial history. *Mestizaje* was a mode of colonial gov-

ernment in the earlier years of conquests, in which conquistadores were rewarded for marrying into the noble families of the Inca and Aztec empires (as well as noble lineages from other indigenous groups). Even common Spanish soldiers were rewarded with privileges for marrying indigenous women and baptizing their offspring in the Catholic Church, and penalized if they failed to do so. Enslaved African men had incentives to marry indigenous women as well, as their offspring would be born free: the condition of the child would follow the condition of the mother. Indeed, while there was extensive classification of racial mixtures, each with its distinct set of obligations and privileges, *mestizaje* was considered an important factor in creating Catholic unity in colonial Latin America (Saldaña-Portillo 33–65). Thus *mestizaje* cannot be translated as miscegenation which, in the Anglo-American context, was explicitly outlawed and often punishable by death. In the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latin American context, and particularly in Guatemalan history, *mestizaje* did not necessarily entail actual biological reproduction but referred to a cultural process by which indigenous people became ladinized, a process Guatemalan indigenous people understand as that of abandoning the cultural and linguistic practices that constitute one as indigenous.

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The Black Legend
of Texas

ANNA BRICKHOUSE

AMONG THE MANY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF RAÚL CORONADO'S *A WORLD NOT TO COME: A HISTORY OF LATINO WRITING AND PRINT*

Culture is its vivid account of a lost Latino public sphere, a little-known milieu of hispanophone intellectual culture dating back to the early nineteenth century and formed in the historical interstices of Spanish American colonies, emergent Latin American nations, and the early imperial interests of the United States. In this respect, the book builds on the foundational work of Kirsten Silva Gruesz's *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing*, which gave definitive shape to the field of early Latino studies by addressing what were then (and in some ways still are) the "methodological problems of proposing to locate the 'origins' of Latino writing in the nineteenth century." Gruesz unfolded a vast panorama of forgotten Spanish-language print culture throughout the United States, from Philadelphia and New York to New Orleans and California, in which letters, stories, essays, and above all poetry bequeathed what she showed convincingly were "important, even crucial, ways of understanding the world" that had been largely lost to history (x).¹ Coronado's book carries forward this project of recovery, exploring a particular scene of early Latino writing centered in Texas during its last revolutionary decades as one of the Interior Provinces of New Spain, its abrupt transition to an independent republic, and its eventual annexation by the United States. As a "history of textuality" rather than a study of literary culture per se (28), the book tells the story of the first printing presses in Texas but also evinces the importance of manuscript circulation as well as private and sometimes unfinished texts. *A World Not to Come* concerns both print culture and origins but refuses to fetishize either, attending to the past not to "the degree that it is a measure of the future," as Rosaura Sánchez once put it, but for the very opposite reason: because it portended a future that was never realized (qtd. in Gruesz, *Ambassadors* xi).

The particular past brought to life in vivid, archival detail in Coronado's study is a largely misunderstood and sometimes simply

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forgotten revolutionary scene in the war of Mexican independence from Spain. This scene takes place neither in Dolores, where Father Hidalgo issued the renowned *grito* or cry for liberation from colonial authority in 1810, nor in Mexico City, where Agustín de Iturbide's forces marched into power and ended Spanish rule permanently in 1821, but in the lesser known and little celebrated revolutionary milieu of Texas in 1813. That year, Texas became the first province of New Spain to declare its independence on the basis of a republican government and a written constitution. But its revolutionary history has been long ignored or misconstrued by historians of both the United States and Mexico because it ended, at least from the state-consolidating perspective of nationalism, in failure. Coronado urges that we consider other vantage points. The early revolution in the province of Texas "may have failed to establish a nation, but an alternative language of modernity began to sediment itself" in the history of early Latino writing and political thought. This sedimentation, which he excavates, is now a rich potential resource: "By returning to these moments of aspiration and failure, perhaps we, too, may be inspired to imagine our present and future in more capacious ways" (20).

In this essay, I highlight some of the most important contributions of Coronado's study while also answering his call to revisit the failed revolution at the center of his book in order to glimpse the present. I do so by way of a skewed but I hope illuminating perspective on the events in question, which are given voice in the oldest and most widely circulated magazine of the early-nineteenth-century United States. The point is not to better understand what happened (the research that stands behind Coronado's book is authoritative) but to return with eyes fresh from reading his study to a moment in which early Latino literary and political history were crucial to—and then definitively dismissed

from—a national United States narrative about revolution in the hemisphere.

In the July 1836 issue of the *North American Review*, a long and unsigned essay appeared under the simple title "Mexico and Texas." Its self-stated purpose was to present the *Review's* national readership with an extended analysis of "the past and existing state of things . . . in the portion of Mexico in our immediate neighborhood" (Bullard 227). That "portion," of course, was the nascent Republic of Texas, where four months earlier a revolution enacted largely by Anglo-American settlers and unsanctioned United States soldiers who had fled their assigned posts had culminated in independence from Mexico. By July, the question of how the United States should relate to the new self-styled republic—which had not yet received official recognition by any nation and was already seeking United States annexation—was at the forefront of national debate. As the *North American Review* observed, "The moment appears to us not inappropriate, to invite the attention of our readers" to the history of Texas (227). Filled with wry understatement and circumlocution, the article presented itself as urbane, dispassionate, and above all cautious on the subject of contemporary politics. The author warned against a rush to judgment about the United States position on the disputed territory, reminding readers that even an agreed-on purchase of Texas would be no more legal according to Mexican law than "the President and Senate of the United States ced[ing] to [Mexico] the state of Louisiana or Missouri." Even if the "large bodies of fine land" and "temperate climate" of Texas could be had, by sale or by other means, "many wise and reflecting statesmen are now fully persuaded that the territory of the United States is now sufficiently extended" (255).

Despite the essay's tone of evenhanded distance on the subject, its unnamed author had been an avid participant in the long

history he went on to narrate here. Henry Adams Bullard was, at the time of the publication of the essay, a recently resigned United States Congressman representing Louisiana.² In 1813, however, he had been a twenty-four-year-old adventurer who traveled to Texas as a filibuster acting on a secret assignment to effect a coup in the leadership of the revolution unfolding there—an earlier and lesser-known revolution that is also one of the main topics of Coronado's research in *A World Not to Come*.³ Occurring nearly twenty-five years before, this failed bid for Mexican independence was launched from what would later be the Texas-Mexico border, and it was the product, as Coronado convincingly argues, of the first Latino public sphere.

At the center of this history lie the writings of two Creole brothers from Revilla, a town on the banks of the Rio Grande in what was then New Spain: José Antonio Gutiérrez de Lara, a priest and a theorist of revolution who wrote a new if fleeting nation into being, and José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, a diarist and ambassador, a purveyor of revolutionary pamphlets, and ultimately a military commander of the San Antonio-based uprising inspired by Mexican *independentistas*. Working in a rising hispanophone American print culture, the Gutiérrez de Lara brothers helped make Texas the earliest province in New Spain to achieve independence, form a republican government, and create a written constitution. In doing so, they also contributed to the origins of Latino literary and intellectual history.

Of the two brothers, only Bernardo appears in the version of this history recounted in the *North American Review*. He plays the story's archvillain, depicted with sinister flourishes that do not go with the article's studied neutrality about contemporary politics. This contrast in tone and style pinpoints how and why the Gutiérrez de Lara brothers and the revolutionary intellectual milieu they occupied were dismissed from later historical

narratives. Indeed, while Bullard's essay gives some of the basic facts of Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara's role in the failed revolution, it also adds significant details that help consolidate a particular discourse of early-nineteenth-century United States politics that we might call a black legend of Texas. The early modern black legend of Spanish imperialism had long provided the English colonies and later the fledgling United States with a convenient foil for their narrative of Anglo-American colonial innocence. The black legend of Texas shows a rhetorical inheritance from its early modern predecessor but has a historiographical mode that developed quite specifically around the fluctuating political space of Texas.

The elaboration of this legend in Bullard's essay centers on Spanish vengeance both inflicted on and carried out by a fictionalized Gutiérrez de Lara, whose combined privilege and incompetence result in unthinkable corruption. "Don Bernardo Gutierrez" enters the story as a wealthy landowner with revolutionary sympathies who was once "among the followers of Hildalgo." For this reason, he is subject to the "vengeance" of Spanish colonial authorities and loses his "handsome estate" and indeed "all of his property" to confiscation. With this personal agenda, he "effect[s an] escape to the United States," where he sets out single-mindedly to drum up support for his proindependence and property-driven interests. Unfortunately for his cause, however, he is ill prepared to move in the refined world of Anglo-American politics: he is "rather uncouth in his manners" and "speak[s] no language but Spanish." Although he succeeds in "inducing" a great deal of United States support for his "expedition" despite the deficiency of his monolingualism, his failure is cast as all but inevitable (234–35).

As the essay continues, Bullard's version of Gutiérrez de Lara assumes a striking resemblance to the eponymous "Spaniard" captain that Melville would famously bring to life some two decades later in *Benito Cereno*. Like

Benito Cereno, this invented Gutiérrez de Lara is, above all, a man “without the qualities necessary for a . . . commander,” mired in “disorder and laxity of discipline” (Bullard 234, 237). The unchecked “relaxation of discipline” under him breeds a dangerous “spirit of insubordination . . . which prove[s] ultimately fatal to the cause” of independence in Texas, a cause that a formidable force of United States volunteers is trying to support. Like Melville’s Captain Delano and crew, these “American volunteers”—including “American officers, some of whom were men of honor and character”—find themselves caught up in a Spanish American disaster of which they are “ignorant” and therefore innocent (236). Gutiérrez de Lara turns out to be “savage rather than brave,” and his “vengeful disposition” leads to “so foul an outrage,” committed in San Antonio, that many of the shocked Americans rebuke their Spanish American leader by fleeing to rejoin “an industrious and free people,” that is, by “immediately returning to the United States” (234, 255, 236). The outrage committed by Gutiérrez de Lara is precisely what Melville’s Delano fears from the “plotting pirate” he sees in Benito Cereno: a “most barbarously violated” pledge that threatens to culminate in “great slaughter” (Melville 98; Bullard 236). In Bullard’s essay, Gutiérrez de Lara, having given a “solemn promise” to treat a group of captured royalists “with the urbanity usual among civilized nations,” instead orders them “inhumanly butchered in cold blood,” “their throats cut,” “their bodies . . . rifled of their watches and trinkets” and “thrown into a deep ravine” (236). The butchery not only disgusts the American “volunteers” (i.e., filibusters waging an unauthorized war against a foreign state) but also evokes “a feeling of horror and disgust in the United States” writ large (237).

As these rhetorical similarities to *Benito Cereno* suggest, the *North American Review* drew deeply from the well of the black legend that Melville satirizes. Thus it is only a mat-

ter of time until Bullard invokes that legend’s central nineteenth-century feature in the figure of “an old Spaniard . . . who had been buried in the dungeons of the Inquisition; whose ankles had been rendered callous by chains” (238). That a rendition of Spanish American history appearing in the pages of a prominent Anglo-American journal in 1836 would be shaped by this legend is hardly surprising, given the presence of American volunteers in the revolution who clearly needed foils. As several fine studies have shown, the “long shadow” of Spain was integral to delineating national United States self-conception from the colonial period onward (DeGuzmán; Greer et al.). The facts themselves—many of which are called into question or outright refuted by Coronado’s research—are less important than the ideological separations instantiated by this version of the history: between civilization and savagery, innocence and atrocity, United States American and Latin American. We might add to this list of enduring binaries the bright, democratizing modernity of print culture and its dark, despotic absence. For this last reason especially, the example from the *North American Review* is helpful in highlighting the value of *A World Not to Come*, for Bullard’s “Mexico and Texas,” like Coronado’s book, tells of the beginning of print culture in Texas.

So deeply entrenched is the black legend of Mexican literary barbarism in this essay’s pages that Bullard cannot conceive of even the most important of Mexican legal writings as having any meaning beyond their mere existence: “With such a people, the written constitution is but little better than a dead letter” (252). No wonder that, when he recounts the arrival of what he believed to be the first printing press in Texas during the attempted revolution, he is invested in establishing the role of Anglo-American influence. As Coronado documents in detail, however, Gutiérrez de Lara had brought a printing press to Texas a full year before the Anglo filibusters arrived

(189), and even the press to which Bullard refers came with a Cuban-born revolutionary who arrived in Texas from the United States and played a role, among many other early Latino writers and transmitters of political thought, in disseminating texts about the revolutionary future of Mexico. In the *North American Review*, however, the key element of Bullard's (inaccurate) story of a fetishized first arrival of the printing press in Mexico is its Anglo-American protagonist: "His name was Moore, a man of singular versatility of talent, possessing a vast amount of practical knowledge, and at the same time brave, enthusiastic, and enterprising" (238). The point of the lavish praise devoted to Moore (about whose identity historians remain uncertain) is to tell a story of Anglo-American skill and courage in bringing printed history to benighted Texas.⁴ As the article announces with fanfare, "Here the printing-press was set up; and the first paper ever published in the Internal provinces of Mexico was issued in Spanish and English in May, 1813" (239). At least one other major detail of this account is wrong: the first Texan newspaper published, the *Gaceta de Texas*, was in Spanish alone. The dual Spanish-English printing touted in the *North American Review* is no paean to the bilingualism of this revolutionary scene, in other words, but an attempt to shore up English-language and Anglo-American hegemony over hemispheric revolutionary history, the history that Coronado recovers: the arrival of printing in Texas, the history of the Spanish-Catholic or Hispanic public sphere on both sides of the Atlantic of which it was a part, and the larger milieu of early Latino literary culture that it helped shape.

Bullard's enlistment of a Texas version of the black legend brings into focus other rhetorical features relevant to early Latino history that are less visible but no less defining. For example, in his story, Anglo-Americans are not the only foil for the Mexican-born "Don Bernardo." The only chance of saving "an en-

terprise stained with so foul a crime" by his butchery is the installment of a new Spanish American leader in the project of revolution: someone "destined to succeed Don Bernardo in the command" on the basis of quite different credentials. This superior leader, Don José Álvarez de Toledo, is "a native of the Island of Cuba." After an extensive résumé of his early accomplishments, the essay describes his political exile from Spain (for "advocat[ing]," in his capacity as a representative in the Cortes of Cádiz, "the independence of Spanish America"). Like Gutiérrez de Lara but under less dramatic circumstances (no seizure of property, no armed forces nearby), he flees to the United States (237). Yet where Bernardo merely "reach[es] the United States," "uncouth," monolingual, and conniving to get help, Toledo takes "refuge in the United States," bringing with him a written document of legitimacy: "an authority, signed by many of the members of the Cortes . . . to take command of any forces which might be in arms to sustain the independence of Spanish America" (234, 237). Álvarez de Toledo and not Don Bernardo, in other words, presents the preferred face of Spanish American independence and—as the repeated mention of his authorized status suggests—the preferred face of a Spanish American residing, however temporarily, in the United States (237). In fact, Álvarez de Toledo was hand-picked for his pliability by a United States special agent with expansionist designs on Mexico.⁵ Bullard's preference for the Cuban-born revolutionary leader over the Mexican one has an imperial rationale, as does his pitting of one early Latino figure against another, though he disavows political reasons.

In "Texas and Mexico," anti-imperial, interimperial, and settler colonial histories intersect to create a strange rhetorical and ideological territory. Bullard's essay makes the familiar argument, for example, that the vast natural resources of Texas—its "great natural beauty and fertility" and its

“extensive prairies,” adaptable to “the culture of cotton and sugar” and “the raising of cattle to an unlimited extent”—have, under Spanish rule, been “wholly unknown, or never appreciated.” But this anti-imperial testament to deficiency in the very “existence of the Spanish Government” soon leads to a thinly veiled imperial description of “the Mexican people,” who, unlike the Anglo-Americans residing in Texas, “do not possess the enterprise and industry, necessary to profit by such decided natural advantages of soil and climate” (243). The *Review* here repeats an old staple of English colonial discourse for legitimizing the lack of indigenous rights to occupied land, thus marking the rhetorical site where Anglo-American settler colonialism coexists with and occasionally vexes the expression of United States imperial interests.

Perhaps this is why, alongside Bullard’s almost lustful descriptions of Texan land, we find an odd lapse into a sublime register of poetic awe as the essay recalls the aftermath of the failed revolution in 1813, when “the settlements were almost entirely abandoned,” leaving only “a scanty population”:

At the period we speak of, those extensive and woodless plains were the haunts of innumerable droves of horses “desert-born”; and nothing can be imagined more grand than their movements in squadrons of thousands, when frightened by the approach of the solitary traveller.

A thousand horse—and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretch’d by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr’d by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o’er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on. (243)

This vision of running horses may be “grand,” but it is also, as the citation from Byron’s *Mazeppa* makes clear, full of terror:

Byron’s eponymous hero anticipates death as the herd charges forward: a metonym for the “desert-born” Comanche known for cultivating the horses left behind by Spaniards since the sixteenth century. The failure of the Texas revolution marks not the demise of a short-lived political freedom or the abandonment of republican principles or the loss of liberty and well-being; it spells an existential threat: the decline of a settler population in Texas, the failure of Euro-American settlement, whether Anglo or Spanish. The specter of unsettlement looms in the figure of the wild horses haunting the woodless plains, their “bloodless” mouths and “nostrils—never stretch’d by pain” evoking the violence of domination that they have not yet felt but threaten to impose.

After this ambivalent citation of Byron, the essay tells readers that the “beautiful province” of Texas was, after the failed revolution, “for many years subject to the constant [depredations] of the Comanche Indians,” who were deliberately incited “to massacre the defenseless inhabitants of the frontier” (243–44). These attacks on the now “scanty” settler population proved all the more effective because the Native fighters were equipped with arms and ammunition, furnished, Bullard contends, in a trade for horses, mules, “and, in some instances, captive Mexicans.” But if the *North American Review* puts “captive Mexicans” among the victims of these Native attacks, it also expresses the opinion that the worst abettors of the violence of unsettlement were Mexicans in the United States. After fleeing the failed revolution and relocating to Louisiana, these Mexicans “prosecuted [the human trade] with more avidity” than anyone else, Bullard charges, before putting a particular face to his indictment: “Don Bernardo Gutierrez himself was engaged for several years in fabricating spear points for those Indians” (244). This is Bullard’s trump card: an image meant to evoke a betrayal so deep that his nineteenth-century Anglo-American readers would need no further reason to dismiss

the failed Texas revolution from further consideration, removing Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara from the great hemispheric narrative of revolutionary history once and for all.

The image of Gutiérrez de Lara using his own hands to fashion indigenous weapons, along with the broader assertions about “Mexicans . . . in Louisiana” (244), suggests a quite specific concern about the racial meaning of *Latinidad* within United States borders: not the commonplace fear that racial mixture will destroy the purity of the national body politic but a more profoundly existential anxiety about the fragility of loyalties in a settler colonial modernity built on competing imperial histories of Native elimination and African slavery. As Coronado shows, one of the major United States-backed accusations used to discredit Gutiérrez de Lara during the revolution was his alliance with a Haitian military force to oppose Spanish rule: a band of violent “mulattoes” led by “a Frenchman of color from San Domingo” (251). Two decades later, the *North American Review* essay enlisted the same racial logic to impugn Gutiérrez de Lara’s whiteness but supplemented it with Bullard’s allegations. The unspoken question raised about Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara’s complicity with the Comanche Indians is just what Melville’s Captain Delano wonders about Benito Cereno: “[W]ho ever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize from his very species almost, by leaguering in against it” with settler colonialism’s racial enemies (75)?

The submerged themes of Bullard’s essay are brought into the light by Coronado’s study: Anglo-American print culture putting an end to Mexican literary barbarism, Cuban and Mexican antagonists in the story of *Latinidad* in the United States, Comanche Indians and Haitian mulattoes, “scanty [settler] populations” and species apostasy. With Coronado’s work in mind, we see with more clarity that the black legend of Texas has a flexible racial logic capable of accommodat-

ing new settler colonial interests as they arise. By its closing pages, Bullard’s essay on Texas in 1813 has effectively staged a race war—a mandate “to restrain *Indians*”—as the legal justification for a United States violation of the “Law of Nations” in supporting Texas against Mexico in 1836 (254). The specter of unsettlement, with its empty towns and “desert-born” horses, thus marks early Texas as a symbolic site of settler colonial anxiety in the mid-nineteenth century.

If that specter provides Bullard with the rhetorical means of naturalizing hostility toward an early Latino population born in Mexico but residing in the United States, the black legend of Texas also makes a particular contribution, with its unspoken and always changing racial logic, to our own cultural moment. *Reconquista*, the idea of a Latino reappropriation of former national Mexican territory in the United States Southwest, is a word often used by right-wing supporters of a militarized border. But the more historically (and now demographically) salient term that might be brought to bear on contemporary immigration debates is *indigeneity*, which invites us to locate these debates at the intersection of interimperial history and settler colonial history and which suggests how much Latino studies and Native studies have to offer each other in an era with increasing numbers of migrants whose roots are indigenous. For all these reasons, Coronado’s *A World Not to Come*, with its beautiful evocation of a lost literary culture and an unrealized history that might have been, offers compelling resources for the future.

NOTES

1. On the early Latino literary field, see especially two forthcoming works: a definitive bibliographic essay, “Nineteenth-Century Latino Literature,” by Carmen Lamas, and a broad collection of recent literary scholarship,

The Latino Nineteenth Century, edited by Jesse Alemán and Rodrigo Lazo. See also the vast body of scholarship produced through the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, starting with the first volume, which was edited and introduced by Ramón Gutiérrez and Genaro Padilla. Aranda's discussion of this project as a literary historical emergence ("Recovering") is also helpful, as is Gruesz's "What Was Latino Literature?," which notes that periodicity and canonicity have not always evolved together in Latino literature and describes the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* as occupying "the unusual position of presenting an authoritative canon for a body of literature that doesn't yet have a literary history" (336).

2. Cushing's 1878 index lists Bullard as the author (122).

3. Later in life, Bullard apparently kept his experiences as a filibuster secret, which may explain his choice in 1836 to keep the article anonymous. After the first Narciso López filibustering expedition to Cuba in 1850, Bullard found his own filibustering past dredged up (see Chaffin 159).

4. Given Moore's uncertain identity, Coronado's very different account of the Anglo-American printer Samuel Bangs, captured after his arrival in Texas as a filibuster, is all the more fascinating (267–74).

5. In Coronado's account, Álvarez de Toledo, when he was living in Philadelphia, had already offered to betray Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara and the other revolutionaries to Spain. He may have been less pliable than his imperial United States sponsors thought, in other words (250–51).

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Unsettlers and
Speculators

KIRSTEN SILVA GRUESZ

CONSIDERING THAT IT WAS SUMMERTIME, THE WEATHER IN NEW ENGLAND WAS PUZZLINGLY COLD. NONETHELESS, THE MEN IN THE SEA-beaten wooden ship offered thanks, in the Protestant fashion, for the bounty of fresh provisions: oysters and seals; vast herds of deer, tule elk, and pronghorn. Mutual curiosity informed their encounters with the people they met. The English admired their extraordinary basketwork, their shell ornaments, their headpieces of brilliant black condor feathers.

If the bio- and ethnoscapings of this New England sketch seem a little off, it is because I have moved its longitudinal coordinates west by fifty degrees and spun the time setting of an originary North American encounter back by several decades. The English sailors and supplicants were not Puritan separatists but the remainder of Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation expedition, which made landfall along the Pacific coast—by most estimates, in northern California—in 1579. The story of their several weeks' stay there is speculative in many senses. The fortuitously named *Golden Hind* returned loaded with treasure; the marker that Drake supposedly placed near his landfall buttressed unfulfilled English territorial claims for many years after; and in our own day historians, anthropologists, and geographers both trained and untrained continue to debate the precise location of Nova Albion. This is the very stuff of which counterfactual histories and speculative historical fictions are made: what if other Englishmen had later returned with settlers and supplies? If the English colonial project along the North American Pacific had rooted itself earlier, and farther south than Vancouver, would its later pattern of settlement have pulsed west to east across the continent instead of east to west?

Raúl Coronado's *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture* does not indulge in these kinds of counterfactuals, but it is animated by a related belief in the cleansing power of speculative thinking. Coronado calls his readers to let go of the present-day notion of Texas as "some behemoth of nationalist

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independent feeling” and return imaginatively to the moment when it was “a desolate, emerging, interstitial colony” (*World* 20). This is an effort not so much to re-create what it felt like to live in such a place as to divorce the signifier Texas/*Tejas* from its geotemporal coordinates, as I tried to do playfully with New England. Coronado has written a gripping account of insurgent political thought as developed by communities of Spanish speakers centered in but not limited to the shifting boundaries of Texas before and after its incorporation into the United States: “a history of false starts, of dreams that failed to cohere” (394). These people formed among themselves imagined communities that “did not necessarily lead to nationalism”; the hand-copied declarations, printed broadsides, and newspaper editorials they authored and embraced reflect—he argues—“conceptions of rights and subjectivity that do not genuflect to our now dominant account of possessive individualism.” His protagonists are text makers and text receivers, hearers as well as readers, who responded to the collapse of monarchism and what he calls the “disenchantment of the world” that followed, by developing ideas about sovereignty through a kind of historical back channel: late-medieval scholasticism. This nonsecular yet curiously modern form of reason was conveyed by and allegorically displayed in the form of the printing press. Coronado proposes “a discursive history of these texts” that “will go a long way toward offering an alternative model of modernity as it unfolded in the Americas” (8). The book identifies itself, then, as a history of ideas: more than simply recovering this early Texas, he wants to reverse its position on the periphery of United States American intellectual life—to move events that were previously footnotes into the main body of that painful text about how we became Americans.

Coronado’s book appears in the midst of a renaissance of sorts in scholarship on the early Americas that, while mining mostly

unrelated source materials, similarly seeks to reorient colonial centers and peripheries, to detach place-names from their mythic accretions, to forget the stories we think we know. Kathleen Donegan’s *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement*, for instance, encourages us to dwell in the precarity and unknownness of the Europeans’ “seasoning time”: to “try to see it as a cluster of unassimilated events rather than as an established body of forward-leaning facts” (7). Balancing the once-dominant Plymouth story with those of Roanoke, Jamestown, and Barbados, Donegan argues that the cycle of suffering and violence marks the mutual condition of indigenous and Europeans caught in “the unsettling act of colonial settlement” (2). That term, *unsettlement*, is the fulcrum of another major (and MLA-laureled) revisionist work, Anna Brickhouse’s *The Unsettlement of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560–1945*. Brickhouse, like Donegan and Coronado, emphasizes the “desolate, emerging, interstitial” quality of colonial spaces: from the place in the Chesapeake Bay that the Spanish called Ajacán, southward to *la Florida* and the Caribbean, then back again to the United States–Mexico border.

Finally, Dana Luciano and Ivy G. Wilson’s edited collection *Unsettled States* showcases new scholarship on the long nineteenth century. Luciano’s introduction finds a perfect metaphor for unsettlement in the New Madrid earthquakes that rocked a region just undergoing a significant shift in territorial governance, from Spanish Louisiana to American Missouri, and spawned one of the great unfulfilled revolutions of all time, Tecumseh’s panindigenous insurgency. (In a suggestive overlap, the years Luciano isolates here, roughly 1811–13, mark the very moment at which, according to Coronado, the brothers José Antonio and José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara were acting as agents of the alternate modernity of popular sovereignty in Texas.) Nationalism, Luciano reminds us, nourishes

partial histories and maps out self-interested perspectives, such that “[b]oth time and space become ‘settled’ . . . as new cultural histories and trajectories are developed to secure and perpetuate the settlement’s geographical revisions” of what had been and continues to be Native space (9). She contrasts the critical work of unsettling against the weak inclusionary logic of multiculturalism and against overly simplistic paradigms of resistance—*resistance* being a term about which Coronado and Brickhouse are similarly skeptical. As Brickhouse defines it, “*unsettlement* signals not merely the contingency and noninevitability but the glaring incompleteness of the history of the New World as we currently know it” (2).¹ That each of these books focuses on different points in traditional Americanist period divisions—Donegan’s concentrates mainly on the seventeenth century and Coronado’s on the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth, whereas Brickhouse’s leaps boldly from the sixteenth through the twentieth—suggests that unsettlement has not only multiple meanings but also a long reach.

A World Not to Come bears the added burden of addressing another field, one that extends beyond the humanistic disciplines: Latino studies. Although the main title orients us toward futurity, the subtitle describes the book modestly as a history of Latino print culture. Perhaps no other population in the United States today attracts so much speculative attention and future-driven anxiety as Latinas and Latinos: will they assimilate culturally, educationally, economically? Will their differently vexed racial codes overcome or be overcome by those of the mainstream? Will the Latino voting bloc actually move the political needle? Will the United States continue to be home to the second-largest Spanish-speaking population on the globe, or will today’s bilinguals adopt English with new vigor? Such speculative betting on Latino futures—which will also occur outside the bounds of the United States nation-state,

especially if Puerto Rico changes status—weighs heavily on efforts to construct a Latino past. Coronado cautiously suggests resonances between the experiences of past and present communities but resists the imposition of a genealogy that would precisely join them. A history of Latino writing and print culture centered on Texas, therefore one of many, would seem to be categorizable as a work of border studies. Yet the term *border studies*, invented by historians a century ago and popularized by the so-called transnational turn in American studies, may have exhausted its critical potential: Coronado rarely uses it, although his book is certainly a rebuttal to nationally oriented optics.²

Put differently, the reorientation of space implicit in border studies must be accompanied by the reorientation of time promoted by theorists of unsettlement. Coronado writes that the object of his analysis extends to “the space of overlap between Spanish America and the United States, to the individuals and communities of ‘Latinos’ that circulated in the United States and throughout the Atlantic world”—more specifically, “the geographic space that *would become* Mexico and the United States” (*World* 17). Temporality is important here: *what would become* replaces the more common formation *what is now*, as in the project *Languages of What Is Now* the United States, which in the early 2000s made significant inroads against the assumption of American literature’s monolingualism.³ Coronado chooses the “future-in-past tense of the auxiliary ‘would’ and the inchoative aspect of ‘become,’ rather than the past tense proper,” or the fixed end point of *what is now*, because “[t]he future-in-past tense draws out, unfolds, and lengthens the process of ‘becoming’” (*World* 18). Readers of this book and its contemporary kindred are directed not to always historicize but to always unknow: to dwell in Donegan’s future-blind “seasoning time.” Such a mandate may be expecting a lot even of enthusiastic novel readers, and it remains

an unorthodox move for a work of history writing. It raises a question about this crop of unsettlement books, all of which came from scholars in literature departments: Will historians read them? Since *A World Not to Come* received not only a book prize from the MLA but also several awards from historical associations, it may be the bellwether of a shift in the relation between those perennially squabbling intellectual siblings, history and literature.

A turn to one of the kindred works may be helpful here. Like Coronado, Brickhouse rescues from history's footnotes a forgotten figure, the indigenous translator Paquiquineo / Don Luis de Velasco, who used his rhetorical abilities to thwart Spanish settlement designs in Virginia. Before launching into Don Luis's story, however, Brickhouse pulls another plank out from the wobbling foundations of the Pilgrim-origins myth by revisiting its famous translator, Squanto (who came after, not before, Brickhouse's "unfounding father," Don Luis [4]). Squanto, abducted from his native village of Patuxet, came to England only after spending three years in Spain, and Brickhouse proposes that thinking about him as "Hispanophone Squanto" [8] multiplies the vectors of language encounter and gets us closer to the long chains of translation and mistranslation that offered opportunities for indigenous unsettlement. She asks, "[H]ow might the historical subject who was brought to Spain but sidestepped his intended fate as a slave reorient our understanding of the history in which he appears"? (41). Because there is scant record of Squanto and his comrades in Spain, to recall him as "Hispanophone Squanto" thus "requires both the *associative* and the *imaginative* flexibilities of *intellectual* and *speculative* history, respectively" (41; emphases mine). A dialectical method is spelled out here: intellectual history exercises an associative practice; speculative history, an imaginative one. Perhaps a defining feature of unsettlement work, then, is its embrace of the

necessary entwinement of these two ways of articulating the past: as a history of ideas but also as a leap of the imagination that questions what the other narrative has just built.

Brickhouse meticulously documents her sources and accumulates evidence in a way that most historians would be hard-pressed to fault. But, in telling the story of Paquiquineo / Don Luis, she also dives into speculation. When tracking the tiny thread of a reported sighting of the translator twenty years after he led the Spaniards to their deaths, for instance, she suggests he might have inspired or led a series of violent Indian strikes against Spanish settlements across Florida. Most historians would find insufficient evidence here to make a case, yet the speculation itself provokes a defamiliarization, an unknowing. Those acts of violence had been seen as isolated events without a purpose or a leader: revolts rather than revolutions. But what if Don Luis was, like Tecumseh, a master of communication circuits that were deliberately kept from European eyes and that remain so?

It is easy to draw a bright line between the genres of narrative history and historical fiction: narrative history is written by experts who can testify about facts; historical fiction is written by people who exercise artistic liberty—whether in the Broadway musical *Hamilton* or in the recent crop of Puritan gothic films. The distinction between writers of speculative history and of speculative fiction, however, is more nebulous. The story of Don Luis, like the story of the Gutiérrez de Lara brothers, feels like it could be an episode in one of the counterhistorical fictions that are so common to New World novelists like Alejo Carpentier or Maryse Condé. Perhaps this is why unsettlement studies seem to emanate mostly from literature departments, even as their method seems far removed from what used to be called literary criticism.

Coronado's book has excited some controversy among historians yet seems to be legible to them as a work of history. In

a roundtable organized by the Society of United States Intellectual Historians and featuring distinguished scholars on both sides of the United States–Latin American aisle, Coronado explained that he wanted to reconstruct “the world of ideas” in early Spanish-speaking Texas “because these communities were among the first to attempt to understand their world by drawing from both Hispanic-Catholic and Anglo-Protestant epistemologies. . . . This is a ‘Latino’ history not in the identitarian sense—no one identified as such during the nineteenth century—but in the epistemic sense” (“Author’s Response”). Again, he follows Native scholarship in underscoring the legitimacy of multiple ways of knowing. Intellectual history is indeed an associational practice, constellating individual utterances and widely shared discourses: if those assemblages are thick enough, they qualify as evidence to historians. But what of Brickhouse’s other requirement, the imaginative flexibility that goes by the name of speculative history? For all the overtones of Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin summoned by the phrase “a world not to come,” Coronado’s book ultimately weighs in more heavily on the intellectual-history side, following the precise verbal inflection of “what would become,” than on the speculative side. In its moving final pages, however, Coronado again invokes the transtemporal imagination: “Histories can enrich our own imaginaries by reintroducing concepts that had been discarded or, perhaps more accurately, existed only liminally” (*World* 395). One wonders how far into the speculation zone historians are willing to follow. This unsettled ground may simply be one that we literary people are better at describing.

A mainstream history book whose title bears an uncanny resemblance to Coronado’s may help answer this question. In January 2014, as Coronado was accepting his prize at the MLA convention, Felipe Fernández-Armesto’s *Our America: A Hispanic History*

of the United States was released, to a level of positive media attention that rarely accompanies even crossover scholarship in literature. Fernández-Armesto’s subtitle shares the same modest article, claiming to be *a* but not *the* history of the group fuzzily labeled as Hispanic or Latino, as well as a similar mandate to reorient conventional geographies: it adopts “a point of view of a history of the United States that starts in the south and is slanted towards a Hispanic perspective” (23). Fernández-Armesto begins, with evident relish, on such a defamiliarizing note, recounting how he would trick job candidates into misnaming the first permanent settlement in what is now the territory of the United States. None guess his answer: Ponce, Puerto Rico. He proposes “a rewriting of the country’s past” from that point of origin (5). So far, he is writing in the vein of the critical unsettlers. But when it comes to the revolutionary period that is so crucial for Coronado’s story, Fernández-Armesto perceives none of the same locally sourced ideas or political energies. Dismissing republicanism in the Americas as a weaker movement than in Spain, he mentions not a word about the embrace of independence among the people of San Antonio de Béxar, referring only to a “filibuster army” that “took advantage of the chaos of the wars in which Spain was embroiled to attack San Antonio” a year earlier (134). More than half of Coronado’s book, in other words, takes place in the interstices of this single line in Fernández-Armesto’s purportedly revisionist, south-to-north Hispanic counterhistory. The brevity of the reference can’t be because the 1813 insurgency-uprising in Béxar had been completely unknown to earlier historians before: far from it, as Coronado’s extensive notes document.

Our America is a wide-angle synthesis, so this lack might be forgivable, if it weren’t for the persistence with which Fernández-Armesto invokes the language of alternative histories and minoritarian perspectives. The

colonial era provides him with several speculative asides, and when he reaches the nineteenth century, he laments that the potential of an “alternative America—the creation of Spanish missionaries and colonists in what is now the United States—was already in ruins” (131).⁴ In the end, however, the book disavows speculative history altogether. Taking on Samuel P. Huntington’s question of what the United States would have become had it been settled by Spanish Catholics rather than English Protestants, Fernández-Armesto writes impatiently, “The question, like all counterfactual questions, is tiresome because it is hard enough to know what did happen in the past without worrying about what might have happened” (333). Despite Huntington’s conclusions about the threat posed to American institutions by Latino immigration, many Latina/o scholars have found in his question a useful opening to the project of unsettling national memory. Fernández-Armesto shuts down that dialogue, asserting that the “factual basis of Huntington’s question is false” because “a lot of what is now the United States was settled by French and Spanish Catholics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (333) and “some places have never lost continuity with the Spanish past” (343). His example is Santa Barbara, California—the epitome of a Spanish fantasy heritage site romanticized for the consumption of a mostly Anglo elite.

Fernández-Armesto has written, then, a traditional history of Hispanics-Latinos (he sees no meaningful distinction between the two terms), not a Latino history in Coronado’s sense. While *Our America* required some recovering of things the nation has forgotten, doing the recovering without the unsettling can at times cause outright harm.⁵ Which brings me to one of the most valuable gifts offered by Coronado’s rich work: the four appendixes containing transcriptions and translations of some of the key archival documents he discusses, none previously published. I am particularly captivated by the most recogniz-

ably literary of these additions to the body of Latino writing: the “Remembrance of the Things That Took Place in Béxar in 1813 under the Tyrant Arredondo,” an undated narrative dictated by one or more female survivors of the slaughter, capture, and communal torture of the San Antonians who supported Gutiérrez de Lara’s 1813 call to independence. Coronado integrates this story into the climax of his chapter on that antimonarchical uprising, initiating what I hope will be a long thread of scholarly discussion about this virtually unknown manuscript, collected long after its composition by Hubert Howe Bancroft, a border historian. As the *testimonio* of these “citizen mothers” (427)—a term used interchangeably with “patriot women” (428)—the “Remembrance” is a complexly structured and haunting narrative about how unchecked power seeks to turn souls into nonpersons.

After a devastating loss to Spanish royalist forces at the Battle of Medina, a few hundred of these proindependence San Antonians fled in family groups east toward the Louisiana border, hoping to find refuge in the United States. They trekked two hundred miles, carrying their children and a few possessions, but were caught by the pursuing troops. Most of the men were executed; the surviving women and children remained in the hot sun for days, “until the water became stagnant with the bodies of the dead that surpassed a hundred.” The rhetoric of this passage emphasizes a slippage from the human to the animal in the needless torture and intimidation tactics used on refugees who had already been captured. The tactics backfired when a “European Captain” “lost his judgment upon seeing such inhumane carnage” and killed the head of his own division (428). Strip-searched and robbed of their valuables and papers, the mostly female group was force-marched back to San Antonio. They reentered their hometown bound together at the hands with rope, like a line of convicts or slaves, recalling for us what the narrative

itself does not, that Spanish and creole wars on Indians had involved the same iconography of captives roped together, often bound for forced labor. But the ordeal was not over: the captives were sent to a rural estate or *quinta*, where they were held as forced laborers to provision the troops, liming corn to make *nixtamal*, grinding it, and making tortillas. The guards and officers, according to the *testimonio*, expressed a sadistic enjoyment of absolute power over the women's bodies, degrading them as contaminated and worthless. Women with infants were not allowed to breastfeed them, and those with older children shooed them away to beg crumbs from the unfriendly townspeople.

The narrator catalogs these abuses with both precision and elision, evoking the enslavement story of Harriet Jacobs or the survivors' tales from Wounded Knee. As with the many other stories of suffering to which "Remembrance" might be compared, sexual violence is hinted at through the trope of the unsayable. The guards, according to the narrating woman or women, used the "crudest words and the most impure, indecent, and ugly actions, that they cause one to blush to say them, to write them, that not even the paper will permit them to be written down" (431). One sergeant named Acosta, an early template for Simon Legree, "would whip each and every one of them whenever he wanted, without more cause or motive than having a desire to do so," denigrating them as whores and calling himself "the God of the whores" (432). He and other guards attempted to dehumanize them both through violence to the body and with discursive violence, "inventing new methods of punishment in order to mortify and defame them" (431). Acosta's tactics relied on breaking down the codes of caste and gendered value that had previously governed the lives of these "patriot mothers": once, he caught them enjoying a moment of mutual consolation and laughter, and as punishment handed them sixty shirts to mend.

When they asked for needles, he pulled out his penis and said, Here's your needle. Yet the act of narrating such details asserts the women's personhood in the face of efforts to destroy it.

Violation is suggested in another way: the metonymic substitution of one body part for another. Coronado comments on one such striking detail, of the women's feet and fingers being torn from the unremitting hard labor and being forced to work with the hot corn-lime mixture before it properly cooled, so that their blood would commingle with the corn (255–60). The narrator (or narrators) suggests that the skin of some of the women was delicate because they had never ground *nixtamal* or made tortillas before, meaning that some had been wealthy enough to have servants, likely indigenous or mestiza women. But clearly most of the women knew how to do those chores quite well, and they knew how to mend. Nowhere does the narrator break down the caste or social composition of the hundred captive women in the *quinta*, perhaps because they felt bound together by suffering. It is helpful to recall here Nicole Guidotti-Hernández's conclusion that masculine power structures in both the United States and Mexico "relied on the abjection of certain specter bodies" against which violence was legitimated: the bodies of women discarded or marked as illicit by sexual policing (Acosta's "whores") and the bodies of indigenous people of both genders (9). This observation does not lessen the suffering of any of the San Antonio settlers who were punished for asserting their political agency, but it reminds us of Donegan's rationale for dwelling on the miseries of colonial settlement, including those of Europeans: "because doing so challenges us to hold suffering and violence in our minds at the same time" (204). "Remembrance" should take its place among other important American narratives of the corrosive effects of structural violence accompanied by impunity.

After twenty days for some of the prisoners, fifty-four days for others, they were allowed to leave the *quinta*. But they came home to discover themselves literally unsettled, pushed out of their old homes: “[A]fter they were freed, no one [in San Antonio] would acknowledge them, even here in the heart of their own *Patria*” (Coronado, *World* 432). The pathos of this rejection, the injury of their disavowed personhood, is directed not only at their fellow Texans but also toward a different reading audience, whose sympathy it demands. While the term *patria*, homeland, refers here to Béxar, elsewhere in this document it addresses fellow citizens of Mexico, where the document ended up.⁶ What if, instead, the citizen-mothers had retraced their steps and, this time, reached their destination of Louisiana? What place might “Remembrance” have found then in our national memory of suffering, loss, and ultimately survival?

About sixty miles south of San Antonio, along the centuries-old route to Monterrey, Mexico, sits the South Texas Detention Center, one of eight in that state contracted by the federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agency. A privately run prison for violators of immigration laws, it contains bed space for just under 1,500 men—roughly the number of the insurgent army of the forgotten 1813 revolution—and one-third again as many women. The occupants are mostly Central American and Mexican, caught on their way to what they hoped would be refuge in the United States. Many of the women await reunion with their children, who remain at home, fled with them and were separated, or already live on the United States side of the border. Most arrive having already suffered unspeakable violence along the migrant trail. Spatially occluded from public view, these detention centers represent an arrested temporality as well. While individual cases are reviewed, the telos of each person’s story is unknown: they are noncitizens, temporary

residents—and potential Latinos—until they become, in most cases, deportees. Their still-unfolding stories echo across this Texas place, suturing past and future in a way that should profoundly unsettle us.

NOTES

1. Luciano proposes unsettlement as a pliable critical method that “operates in a number of contexts, including critical multiculturalism, postcolonial and indigenous studies, spectral historiography, narratology, and queer, trauma, and affect theory” (8). Brickhouse, while similarly drawn to the multiple connotations of the term, uses it more concretely to mean an action “undertaken by an indigenous subject [that] involves the concrete attempt to annihilate or otherwise put an end to a European colony,” as in the story of Don Luis’s betrayal of Spanish designs through deliberate mistranslation (2).

2. Coronado writes, for example, that “the failure of Texas to sustain its independence and, consequently, its annexation to the United States is why and where historians of Spanish America stop and pass on the baton to historians of the United States, leaving the history of these peoples in limbo, as if their lived experiences could easily be demarcated by the making and breaking of the borders of nation-states” (“Author’s Response”).

3. Known by the acronym LOWINUS and sponsored by Werner Sollors and Marc Shell at Harvard’s Longfellow Institute, the project produced a widely read anthology and an essay collection, and it has republished various translated editions of non-English works. It is no longer active. The MLA forum *Literatures of the United States in Languages Other Than English* grew out of the loose affiliation brought into being by LOWINUS, but it normalized the antiteleology of “what is now the United States.”

4. Fernández-Armesto cites his mixed Spanish-British heritage as part of his qualification to write the book, and the Hispanic perspective he offers reflects that background. For instance, the section about early Texas is replete with sentences whose subject is the Spanish authorities, positioning them as the only historical actors who can convey the Latino perspective. Likewise, indigenous people are represented as victims with no agency: “the indios seemed to respond to every kind of treatment, from brutal to benign, in the same ways: they died and they bred less” (54). His perspective on the mission system tends toward the apologetic: “Mission life was, in its way, as hard for the friars as for the indios” (117). The word “squaw” even makes a nonironic appearance (50).

5. On the noncoincidence of recovery work with minoritarian histories, see Lazo; Streeby.

6. The document ends by noting that the real and personal property of the families was never returned to them: it may have been used as legal testimony. Because it compares the Bejareños to other local supporters of Mexican independence movements and calls the women citizens, it is clearly addressed to an audience in Mexico.

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theories and
methodologies

Reimagining the Literature of the Modern Republic

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RAÚL CORONADO'S AMBITIOUS AND BEAUTIFULLY REALIZED BOOK ABOUT THE LITERATURE OF FAILED REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION IN LATE-

eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Texas is a major contribution to the expanding field of scholarship that recovers, contextualizes, and interprets Latino/a writing. This wide-ranging study traces the influence of scholastic thought in Spain and Spanish America, culminating in a discussion of the resonances of that intellectual tradition after 1848, as newly conquered Tejanos faced expropriation and violence by United States Americans. Coronado shows how the ideas of Thomas Aquinas and his Spanish interpreters—notably Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), a Jesuit and the leading member of the Thomist School of Salamanca, whose ideas were broadly influential in the Hispanic world—presented a durable alternative to the liberal philosophy of John Locke and Adam Smith. In part through Suárez's influence, the Roman Catholic concept of the *corpus mysticum* fed into a distinctive vision of the modern republic that elevated the *pueblo* over the individual. That this alternative tradition failed initially to gain political and cultural ground explains the melancholy title of Coronado's study, while the possibility of recuperating this history as a usable past animates the project as a whole.

In some ways *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture* occupies the same ground as Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840). Tocqueville was a liberal Catholic who looked to the United States for a version of democratic republicanism that might embrace the aspects of Catholic theology and tradition that he saw as valuable. Near the end of the first volume of *Democracy in America* (1835), he assessed "The Main Causes Which Tend to Maintain a Democratic Republic in the United States" (232).¹ He considered the question first in a hemispheric perspective, noting that Spanish America had equal or superior geographic advantages to Anglo-America but had failed to establish stable republics. Next, reflecting on the importance of law, he concluded that while law was more important than geography, it was not sufficient to explain

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the success of republican government in the United States: "Mexico, which is as fortunately situated as the Anglo-American Union, has adopted [United States federal] laws but cannot get used to a democratic form of government" (359). Mexico's diversity alone did not explain its comparative failure. Tocqueville went on to note that shared race and religion did not guarantee the success of a democratic republic, as evidenced by the disorder in the American West. Setting aside the racial diversity of the United States (which he treated in the next chapter, on the future of the "three races" inhabiting the United States), he stated that "almost all the inhabitants of the Union have sprung from the same stock, speak the same language, pray to God in the same way, experience the same physical conditions, and obey the same laws." What, then, distinguished East from West in the United States? Unlike the chaotic West, the East was notable for the "customs, opinions, and social habits" that supported a "republican government" that was "strong and orderly, proceeding with mature deliberation." The customs, opinions, and social habits that made republicanism possible included "literary study and practical education" (360). Tocqueville also stressed the prevalence of religion united with liberty.

Running through *Democracy in America* is the question of the place that Catholicism would come to hold in the United States. Tocqueville, who described himself in the work as a devoted Catholic, considered the issue repeatedly and with an eye to its implications for republican government in Europe and the Americas. The secularism of the French Revolution produced a massive backlash not only in France but also, as Coronado relates, in Spain, particularly after Napoleon invaded that country in 1808. Freedom of religion set the American revolutionary tradition apart from its secular French counterpart, and Tocqueville explored its implications. Alluding to Augustine, he observed, "if the human mind is allowed to follow its own

bent, it will regulate political society and the City of God in the same uniform manner and will, I dare say, seek to *harmonize* earth and heaven" (336). He noted the rising numbers of Catholic immigrants and stressed the compatibility of Catholicism with democratic republicanism, even claiming that Catholics "are the most republican and democratic class in the United States" (337). He claimed further that Catholic laypeople were all equals in their subordination to the clergy and that there were fewer differences of wealth among them. As for the clergy, they distinguish revealed truth, which is beyond discussion, and "political truth which they think God has abandoned to man's free inquiry." Thus, he concluded, "American Catholics are both the most obedient believers and the most independent citizens" (338). In a later section he projected that the United States would become increasingly Catholic as the appeal of its harmony and unity drew in converts.²

Tocqueville's predictions about the future of the United States both were and were not true. The first volume of *Democracy in America* appeared in the same year that Lyman Beecher, a Presbyterian minister and the father of the novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, articulated strong nativist views in *A Plea for the West* (1835). Beecher warned that Catholic attitudes toward the social and spiritual value of hierarchy threatened to undermine the American republic. Catholics in the United States were more loyal to the church than to the nation, Beecher opined, and he urged his fellow citizens to love Catholics but hate Catholicism (55–66). Despite the virulent nativism that Beecher's words helped unleash, Irish Catholics—whose transformative impact on the United States was central to Tocqueville's predictions about the future of the republic—were eventually able to become "white" (Ignatiev), and John F. Kennedy's election to the presidency set to rest old debates about Catholic loyalty. Other European Catholic immigrant groups—notably

Germans and Italians—have been assimilated to a greater extent than Latino/a Catholics, even though the United States incorporated large numbers of Mexican Catholics in 1848. The persistence of ethnic distinctions is due in part to conflicts rooted in the intersection of race and tradition: the American Catholic Church is still coming to terms with the indigenous difference symbolized by the Virgin of Guadalupe.³

Coronado explicitly distances himself from a race-based interpretation of this history. He characterizes post-Conquest Anglo-American hostility to Tejanos not as a reaction against a mestizo community but as the consequence of a sometimes violent competition for land and wealth that involved language, religion, and culture as battlegrounds, with literacy and print as weapons. His main textual sources were produced by Spanish American elites who identified with a Spanish diaspora. Thus he writes:

[N]otwithstanding the efforts on the part of an ever-reduced Tejano elite, most Tejanos had been or (after the arrival of the railroad and capitalist incorporation of Texas into the national economy) would become thoroughly racialized and colonized. It was a brutal history that terrorized Mexicans in the United States, robbed them of their property, stripped them of their rights, and barred their children access to educational opportunities. (379)

The seeds of hope were nurtured in Catholic schools like San Antonio's Ursuline Academy, founded in 1851, which taught a multilingual student body from Texas and northern Mexico. In his conclusion, Coronado considers the notebook of Florencia Leal, a student at the academy, which is one of only two female-authored sources that he found in the archives. Leal's adolescent writings and her later notations about the births of her eight children give a window into the kind of incipient subject formation associated with the written and printed word. At the same time,

connections between this intimate sphere and the public sphere were foreclosed by the shutting down of the handful of newspapers that constituted most of Tejano print culture.

This focus on literacy and print culture forms a central element in Coronado's study, even as Coronado emphasizes that oral and performative aspects distinguished Mexican and Tejano societies from their Anglo-American counterparts. Underlying his complex and subtly woven narrative is a set of assumptions about orality and literacy that deserve further consideration. He presents Anglo-American culture as essentially Protestant in nature. Its basic textual orientation, he suggests, was shaped by the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, the idea that scripture is the ultimate arbiter in matters of faith. He follows conventional analysis when he argues that because Roman Catholics gave a greater place to the spoken word, ritual, tradition, and authority of the church, they were therefore less committed to literacy and education than their Protestant peers. There are broad truths here that can be easily overstated. The Reformation led to a revival of preaching, not to its eclipse. Puritan New England did indeed produce societies with high literacy rates and robust print cultures, but circumstances were different—and much closer to the situation in Texas—in the Protestant South. Among the Christian denominations, Anglicanism, Quakerism, and Methodism all had stances toward the oral, performative, and traditional aspects of Christianity that distinguished them from Congregationalists and Presbyterians. In short, there was a spectrum of verbal practices involving print, manuscript, and performance across Euro-American denominations. Indigenous and African diasporic communities incorporated alternative literacies along with oral and performative elements, while congregations of African American and Native American Christians formed in increasing numbers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In Puritan congregations there was a complicated attitude toward the principle of *sola scriptura*. Believers were encouraged and all but required to read the Bible, yet they were also expected to attend sermons regularly and, in many instances, to defer to the authority of their minister. The antinomian crisis that rocked the Massachusetts Bay Colony beginning in 1636 is the classic instance of a dispute over lay Bible reading and interpretation that sparked a major social conflict. Anne Hutchinson claimed a form of religious leadership anchored in her ability to read and interpret scripture. She respected some ministers, notably John Cotton, while criticizing others. Most of the colony's leaders eventually came to reject her independent approach in favor of practices more oriented toward clerical authority. Their decisions were colored by her gender, but that was not their only concern. Similar conflicts over lay leadership, typically rooted in disputes over hermeneutic legitimacy and clerical control, erupted during the Great Awakening revivals that swept the colonies in the 1730s and 1740s.

The main point that I want to emphasize about this history is that while Protestants did cultivate a distinctive relation to scripture emphasizing lay literacy—a relation made possible by the development of the printing press, which dramatically simplified the dissemination of vernacular texts, including translations of the Bible—this difference did not produce a binary field of religious expression organized by medium, in which Protestants = literacy, Catholics = orality. Indeed, the Protestant embrace of the vernacular is arguably the more important aspect of this history, as it opened up all aspects of worship to lay people. In short, the spectrum of Protestant practice and belief overlapped and intersected variously with Catholic modes of thought and worship. The post-Reformation religious world unfolded to form a variegated mediascape.

A poststructuralist ethos underlies Coronado's approach to the media ecology of

Texas, an approach that is informed at a deep level by Jacques Derrida's arguments about the overturning of hierarchically structured binaries. Derrida's work is frequently cited by Coronado (as is the work of Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, and Charles Taylor), notably in connection with concepts of writing and metaphysics. This focus makes sense insofar as Coronado's aim is to locate the origins of Latino/a literature in an archive of documents that are largely political in nature, including official letters and newspapers. In an analysis modeled in important ways on Michael Warner's *Letters of the Republic* (1990), Coronado tracks the partial formation and then the destruction of a Latino/a public sphere in Texas. He characterizes this public sphere as emergently bourgeois and semiliberal, while also Catholic, with residual republican elements. He distinguishes Texas political culture as well as religious tradition from its Anglo-American counterpart along the lines of literacy and orality. The authors of the texts that he analyzes—proclamations, addresses, official letters, editorials, and narrative histories—participated in a civic order where public readings served an essential function because of low rates of literacy (25% of Tejanos were literate, he notes, compared with 97% of Anglo-American residents of Texas [367]). He emphasizes this difference, even as he acknowledges that such public readings were common also in Anglo-American society, as the form of the Declaration of Independence and the style of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* make manifest.

The central argument, then, is that Tejanos followed a distinct path to modernity that ran parallel to the path traveled by Anglo-Americans, but the Tejano path was abruptly blocked by the settlers who colonized the region and claimed its resources for themselves. Consequently the sense of an interrelated community—the *corpus mysticum*—that the Tejanos might have contributed to the version

of modernity taking shape in the United States was lost, perhaps forever. Late in his book, Coronado supplements the binaries that structure his analysis (Anglo-Latino/a, Protestant-Catholic, liberal-republican) with an intensified emphasis on positioning nineteenth-century Tejanos and their descendants in relation to a transnational Hispanic community for whom the Spanish language (and, to some extent, its literature) provides a significant component of identity.

Without denying the brutal expropriation of the Tejanos, we may ask whether the social vision that Coronado identifies in their writings was as distinctive as he suggests. I have already mentioned Tocqueville's interest in situating Catholicism in American democracy during this period. What would emerge by reorienting this story around a major figure in republican thought whose works influenced leading revolutionaries in British North America and who was also a touchstone in Spanish America from the sixteenth century forward? I am referring to Marcus Tullius Cicero, the philosopher, rhetorician, and leader of the senate in the Roman republic's final years. Ciceronian thought permeated European political philosophy and shaped its literary culture for centuries. His writings on rhetoric and his orations, including the philippics against Mark Antony, were pedagogical staples. So too was *De officiis* (*On Duties*; 44 BCE), a work of ethical theory that cultivated ideas about deliberative thinking, citizenship, and good governance. Cicero's definition of the republic was foundational for Augustine's *The City of God* (426), and his ideas about natural law influenced Aquinas and the Thomists. Cicero was an important figure for Renaissance humanists and a major source for the Jesuits, who as Coronado reminds us profoundly shaped the intellectual world of Spanish America.

A Cicero revival swept the Atlantic world during the age of revolution, culminating in the dramatic recovery of large portions of

De re publica (54–51 BCE), his major work of political philosophy, which had been lost for centuries. It was found in the Vatican Library around 1820, by Angelo Mai, a priest and former Jesuit who had developed a technique for recovering texts from palimpsests. Mai previously uncovered a number of Cicero's orations in this manner, and he was able to retrieve substantial sections of *De re publica* from a manuscript containing writings by Augustine. Mai's discovery and publication of Cicero's main political treatise coincided with republican revolutions then unfolding across the Hispanic world. The treatise caused a stir in literary circles in Europe and the Americas. Its reception in the *North American Review* influenced major theories of the modern republic.

The Cicero revival and its effect on emergent republics offer a way to conceptualize the themes of the common good that circulated in both Texas and the United States.⁴ In the United States, an updated version of republicanism emphasizing the common good—democratic republicanism, as Tocqueville termed it—is most visible among Whig and Republican leaders, including John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln. These ideas appear as well in the writings of Democratic thinkers such as James Fenimore Cooper and David Crockett, who were drawn to Andrew Jackson's economic egalitarianism but alienated by other aspects of his presidency. The works of abolitionist and indigenous rights activists William Apess, Lydia Maria Child, Maria Stewart, and David Walker all contributed to the development of democratic republican ideas, with a notable focus on education and literacy, which is a strong theme in Coronado's history. Invested in the dynamic interaction of oral and written or printed forms, these writers added to the literary legacy of Ciceronian oratory.

What would a consideration of Coronado's story in a comparative rather than contrastive mode yield, focusing on the

similarities of modern republican thought and Ciceronian literary culture in Mexican and Tejano Texas and the United States?⁵ The reach of the Hispanic publishing world of Philadelphia—which Coronado notes involved non-Hispanic Catholic printers—had a significant place in this tale. Texts addressing the republican revolutions of Spanish America circulated in Boston, where they were featured in the *North American Review*. Doubtless they attracted readers in Washington, New York, and elsewhere. There was widespread interest in the sister republics to the south: when the Marquis de Lafayette toured the United States in 1825–26, the toasts at welcoming events often made reference to the revolutionary movements in Spanish America. Another facet of this comparison involves the interest that United States–based authors had in Spain and Spanish America. The young James Fenimore Cooper took an interest in the activities of Francisco de Miranda, who came to the northeastern United States during the winter of 1805–06 seeking support for his revolutionary endeavors. Cooper may even have considered joining Miranda’s ultimately unsuccessful expedition to secure Venezuelan independence. Though less adventuresome, other writers of Cooper’s day took an interest in Spain and Spanish America. Washington Irving published a major biography of Christopher Columbus in 1828, and William Cullen Bryant translated poems from the Spanish.

The most delicate—and tantalizing—act of comparison would involve David Crockett, the Democratic politician, orator, and autobiographer, who eventually broke with Andrew Jackson over what Crockett felt was excessively strict party discipline. Crockett publicly rejected such partisanship, claiming it violated his republican principles. After losing his congressional seat, he eventually moved to the Republic of Texas, where he died at the Alamo. This story has been framed by Crockett’s reputation as an iconic frontiersman, brutally

conquering the West and its inhabitants, which emerged from the almanacs that bear his name. This is the image that F. O. Matthiessen analyzes in *American Renaissance* (1941). Crockett did not write those almanacs, many of which were published long after his death, but he did produce an autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of Tennessee* (1834), which continues to be reprinted in both popular and scholarly editions.

This minor but fascinating paraliterary figure may turn out to provide a link between Anglo-American and Hispanic republicanism that differs from that which his present association with the Alamo suggests. Coronado observes that José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, a republican insurgent and diplomat, passed near Crockett’s Tennessee home in 1811. Gutiérrez de Lara, whose diary is one of Coronado’s major sources, was traveling to Knoxville to meet the governor and then on to Washington, where he sought military support for the antiroyalist forces of Father Miguel Hidalgo (Coronado 81). By the time he returned to Mexico, Coronado writes, “Bernardo would transform his political language, from monarchical to republican” (82). Did Crockett and Gutiérrez de Lara cross paths, or did news of Gutiérrez de Lara’s mission reach Crockett as the diplomat passed through Tennessee? And if so, with what consequences? In 1811, Crockett was a young man with a growing family, and over the next few years he began involving himself in local affairs. A decade later, he made a bolder move, running for the Tennessee state legislature and, eventually, the House of Representatives. Was his decision to involve himself in public life motivated in some way by Gutiérrez de Lara? Was the shift in Gutiérrez de Lara’s language from a monarchical to a republican idiom informed at all by his experiences in Tennessee? This is one small example of the new narratives that may emerge from further study of the Anglo-Spanish American republican networks that Coronado’s work brings into focus.

The vigorous discussion of the liberal and republican strands in United States political thought that preoccupied historians in the 1980s and early 1990s died down long ago. An essay by Daniel T. Rodgers, an intellectual historian, marked an end to the major phase of the debate. In “Republicanism: The Career of a Concept” (1992), he argued that the legacies of classical republicanism had been so variously interpreted as to thin the concept out to the point of meaninglessness. The claims about the dominance of the liberal tradition advanced by such leading historians as Joyce Appleby and Gordon Wood had largely won the day, at least among historians. History is one discipline among many, however. In American literary studies, the transition from a republican to a liberal worldview continued to provide a guiding narrative about the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as it does for Coronado. Meanwhile in political theory an interest in updating republican ideals has animated a number of projects, including the work of Philip Pettit and the large body of scholarship devoted to deliberative democracy. The modern republic, particularly in its democratic form, differs in several ways from its classical ancestor, and Coronado shows how Hispanic Catholicism contributed to that formation. To his portrait I would add the pervasive influence of Cicero and literary Ciceronianism. Such fine-grained attention to the sources of republican ideals can foster a more capacious—more democratic—history of American literature.

NOTES

1. The remainder of this paragraph and the following two paragraphs are adapted from my essay “Between Cicero and Augustine.”

2. On conversion to Catholicism among Tocqueville’s contemporaries, see Franchot.

3. On the Virgin of Guadalupe, see Matovina, who discusses the differences between the ultramontane posture of many nineteenth-century European immigrant clergy to the United States and the practices of Mexican Catholics (18).

4. This discussion summarizes elements of my book *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic*.

5. On the comparative and contrastive approaches, see Adorno.

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Three Lessons from the History of a Book

ERIC SLAUTER

HOW DO PRINTED OBJECTS HELP POLITICAL SUBJECTS MAKE AND RE-MAKE WORLDS? THIS IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL QUESTIONS ANIMATING

Raúl Coronado's brilliant book *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture*. I believe Coronado is one of the most gifted and imaginative literary scholars working today. What is more rare, his writing is both provocative and a pleasure to read. Casting himself as a genealogist, he deploys previously little-known printed materials to tell a dramatic story, and he tells it with a narrative confidence seldom seen in studies that rely, as his ultimately does, so heavily on the close reading of texts.

In a series of discontinuous but deeply contextualized studies situated on the borderlands of Mexico and the United States, advancing from the 1810s to the 1850s and taking readers at times much further back (into, say, the diffusion of scholastic thought), Coronado traces a history of foreclosed revolutionary possibilities, of discursive dead ends and epistemological ruptures, and of the failure of communities to become anything but imagined. He probes understudied people, texts, and episodes for what they can tell us about the complex processes of the experience of modernization—and by *modernization* he means the major movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for republicanism, capitalism, individualism, secularism, and nationalism. He uses this discontinuous narrative also to arrest what he takes to be a misguided quest among some in his field for a different kind of genealogy: an unbroken lineage of Latino identity and subjectivity that centers on resistance. Instead, he narrates the making of a people as the unintended consequence of individuals who had hoped and failed to make a nation.

In telling his story, Coronado richly illuminates not simply a world that failed to take hold but also a world about which even specialists knew very little: the cultural world of Latino intellectuals and insurgents in nineteenth-century Texas, a world of learned diplomats and literary magazines, of elite newspapers and seditious revolutionary pamphlets. The result has surprised and even stunned readers in a number of fields his work touches, including Latino

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literary and intellectual history, nineteenth-century cultural studies of the United States, the transnational history of the book in the Americas, and the study of the Atlantic world in the age of revolutions. A string of important prizes and high-level forums, such as this one, have followed, recognizing the importance of the book and helping readers appreciate Coronado's unique contribution. For many readers, the book has truly opened up new worlds and remade old ones.

How did he do it? The book is a bridge between fields, but it is also undeniably a monument: 555 pages, perhaps over 175,000 words, eleven chapters, seventy illustrations, appendixes with transcriptions and translations of hard-to-find printed documents and manuscripts from the 1810s, plus a sixty-five-page online-only bibliography (*Supplementary Bibliography*). His book stands out, particularly in an academic administrative environment committed to the quick conversion of dissertations into first books and in a climate of academic publishing that has been investing less and less in literary studies since the heyday of the linguistic turn gave literary criticism a wider if temporary readership in the humanities and social sciences. The growth of historicism in literary studies over the same time has meant that the bookshelves of literary scholars often sag from the weight of books by historians, just as our bibliographies do. Despite that historicism, most literary scholars still write for one another and not (as many academic historians do) for the market of the undergraduate classroom. Can we blame publishers for setting the prices of our books accordingly?

As Coronado's colleague for nearly a decade at the University of Chicago, I was fortunate to have the chance to watch him develop his research, to marvel at his archival discoveries, to read drafts along the way in his process of turning his dissertation into a book. I was also able to discuss the finished book with its author and some of his first readers, in a

graduate seminar, on its publication in the spring of 2013. Because I have a deep affection for the book, it would be impossible for me to offer critical reflections here—and untimely: I had my chance. Instead, in the spirit of the kind of work Coronado himself displays, I trace some of his book's history, for the reason that a history of *A World Not to Come* contains important lessons for our discipline, especially for those in our discipline who are writing first books. Another reason, one close to Coronado's intellectual agenda and themes, is that to see a book coming into being is also to see the book or books it did not become.

Lesson 1: Expand the Archive

At the most superficial level, the greatest difference between Coronado's dissertation and his book is the bibliography. I first met my future colleague in early 2004. Raúl and I shared a graduate adviser, Jay Fliegelman, a mentor who taught us by example how to use archival materials to tell new stories. Raúl was a finalist for a job, and as part of his visit to Chicago he and I took a tour of the closed stacks of the Newberry Library with the curator of Americana, John Brady. John got a sense of Raúl's interests and started pulling rare items from the shelves, Spanish-language periodicals published in parts of the Americas I knew nothing about. I learned an enormous amount walking around and talking with Raúl then. The field of American literature was in the midst of a hemispheric turn, generating a body of scholarship that tended to stop at the level of comparing texts from different terrains. He wanted to do something different: focus attention on one area. At that time he hoped to discover as much as he could about the nascent Latino literary public sphere of the middle decades of the nineteenth century, a project that had come to seem possible only in the wake of Kirsten Silva Gruesz's *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing*. In the first pages of his 2004

dissertation (“Competing American Colonial Modernities” 3n2), he cited Gruesz’s book as an example of the brand-new archive-based work that was reshaping the field.

That dissertation was a theoretical and historicist project centered in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. An epilogue examined a novel from 1939 about those decades. Coronado engaged with what now, thanks to his efforts, seems a very limited number of materials: four newspapers from Mexico City printed between 1768 and 1791 (mentioned, really, only in passing); a petition from 1832 printed in Brazoria, Texas; five works by José María Tornel printed between 1824 and 1843 (the basis for the dissertation’s two middle chapters); and five newspapers from San Antonio published between 1855 and 1858 (the subject of the final two chapters). In the decade and a half before Coronado completed his dissertation, the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project had revealed new possibilities for research, but it also (he noted in his dissertation) generated problems for the genealogy of Chicana/o identity. “[E]ven as these groundbreaking works have led more students into the U.S. Mexican archive,” he wrote in 2004, “literary historians have become caught in an identity-politics quagmire” (18). Where was the theme of resistance that scholars sought in the archive? “What we find in the literary archive is not a wholesale contestation of U.S. colonialism,” he observed; “we find, in fact, a yearning for the arrival of U.S. modernity” (58).

To make his case, he needed more archives. He found them. I do not know if Coronado was prepared for the exciting wealth of materials—many of them political rather than literary—he subsequently found, first at the New York Public Library as a participant in an NEH summer research seminar in 2005 and then later at the Newberry, the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, the Benson Latin American Library in Austin, the Texas State Archives, the Biblioteca Nacional de

México, and elsewhere. As he encountered new deposits of materials and new genres for his work on the middle decades of the nineteenth century, he extended his temporal range, pushing back from the late 1830s into the 1810s and then into the last third of the eighteenth century. He spent a great deal of time taking an inventory of the materials available for a history of Latino literature. This groundwork has not been duplicated by other scholars and will clearly be foundational for further research in the field that he is helping us reimagine and reshape.

To begin to see the effect of all this research, contrast the fifteen primary sources of the dissertation with the first fifteen pages of the supplementary biography to *A World Not to Come*, made available online by Harvard University Press: the book is based on over one hundred and fifty individual imprints, sixteen periodicals, and nine unpublished primary sources, including the Bexar Archives located at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas, Austin; family papers at the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library in San Antonio; and manuscripts found among the papers of the historian Herbert Bolton at the Bancroft Library. Only the fourth and final section of the published book, “The Entrance of Life into History,” traverses the same ground as the dissertation. Most of the book, the 250-plus pages preceding the chapters of that section, represents his engagement with texts he discovered after his dissertation.

Lesson 2: Ask Big Questions

The new questions he put to his expanded source base are as significant as the archival discoveries he made. The origins of his project are deep and personal. That adviser we shared was fond of saying that every dissertation is an autobiography. In a preface Coronado wrote for the dissertation, entitled “Why I Do What I Do,” he reflected on those moments

of transition between visits to his father's Mexican hometown, where he experienced an "intimate, interdependent, and tranquil way of life," and the return to the "solipsistic, modernized, and metropolitan city" of Dallas (vi). He sought a different way to think about identity formation through history, one rooted in part in his own experiences: "If my personal and intellectual question has been 'Who am I?' and, in turn, 'Who are we as Mexican Americans?' then my dissertation focuses on the dialectical relationship between Mexican and U.S. ways of thinking in the creation of a border culture" (x).

Coronado saw a chance to build a bridge. "Most histories either end with 1846 or begin with 1848," he wrote, "but none bridge that transformation when Mexicans became, legally, U.S. Mexicans" ("Competing American Colonial Modernities" 4). He saw opportunities others didn't: "Scholars have long studied Anglo-Americans' rhetoric of Mexicans as a racial other. What has not been studied, however, is how Mexicans responded to both this increasingly racial rhetoric and the U.S.'s increasingly imperialistic and colonizing attitude towards Mexico and its residents" (71). Near the close of the first chapter of his dissertation, which deals with the place of postcolonial theory in the recent study of Chicana/o literary history, Coronado asked the question that animated his work:

What does it mean for one imperial Western nation (the United States) to conquer another imperial Western nation (Mexico), annex and colonize half of the conquered nation's territory, and only colonize those subjects that remained or were subsequently drawn into the colonizer's territory? To answer this question, it is crucial that we study Chicana/o literary and cultural history prior to its division from Mexico, its splitting, and to historicize this split of Spanish American into Mexican and Chicana/o. In looking at U.S. Mexico and the question of colonialism, one must understand it as a process of the U.S. colonizing a minori-

tized Western Spanish America: of, first, exoticizing and distancing Mexicans, which means making them Other, and excluding them from the history of the West. This history of division, of separation, is what I seek to write in this dissertation. (70 [see also 14

for another version of his goal])

Some version of this paragraph remained in the manuscript of his book until 2011, by which time he had substituted "Latino literary and cultural history" for "Chicana/o literary and cultural history" and added a concluding sentence: "This racialization of Mexicans emerges in the interstices of competing modernities" ("A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing"). But the paragraph doesn't appear in the published book.

Why did he cut it? The way he phrased the question in 2004—"What does it mean . . . ?"—reflects a now-conventional manner of asking questions in our discipline, one that I believe took hold in the 1990s. Focused on meaning making and interpretation, literary scholars all seem to ask questions like this, and it may now be a kind of professional tic—indeed, between 1990 and 2015 the phrase "What does it mean?" appeared twice as many times in *PMLA* (in 125 articles) as in the *American Historical Review* (in 63 articles). Nevertheless, Coronado cut all uses of that phrase from the final book.

Instead, as he writes in the introduction to *A World Not to Come*, to "do justice" to the archival materials, "the question we should ask is not 'How were Latinos conquered and colonized' or 'How did they abet colonization?' but 'How did Latinos become modern?' Or, to be even more precise: What discursive formations gave rise to Latinos?" (29). In many ways the published book bears out the research strategy (the way to answer the question) of the deleted paragraph, but it seems clear that the original phrasing, with its explicit attention to the agenda of nations rather than to the experience of populations, was inadequate for him and for the story he wanted to tell.

Lesson 3: Tell a Good Story

Coronado's literary history is literature itself—with characters and drama. He didn't convert dissertation chapters into articles or publish any of the research he did along the way to the book, and it strikes me that only the long form of a book (and his is a long book) could have allowed him the space he needed to generate, by blending narrative with argument, the right kind of appreciation for the complexities of his material. The case-study essays many of us typically trade in to make interventions along the way to a book, the state-of-the-field periodical polemics where we map current approaches (What are we doing?) or sketch alternatives (What should we be doing?), are not terribly good arenas for developing narrative voice. As a consequence, many of our books read like strings of commentaries with little sense of plot. But why should literary scholars (who, after all, often make their living reading stories) cede storytelling to other disciplines?

It's clear from his dissertation that Coronado early saw not just the opportunity to analyze an overlooked moment and to bridge two bodies of scholarship but also the drama inherent for the subjects he most cared about. Here's how he identified a key problem in his dissertation:

It is no hyperbole to say we know virtually nothing of the world of nineteenth-century U.S. Mexicans, those subjects that inhabited what is today the U.S. Southwest but that in less than thirty years during the nineteenth century inhabited three successive nation-states: New Spain until 1821, Mexico until 1836 in Texas and 1846 for the rest of the Southwest, and, with the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States. ("Competing American Colonial Modernities" 19)

As he immersed himself in the sources, this is exactly the series of world transformations he came to narrate for his subjects.

Human beings rather than texts are the protagonists of his work. José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, a figure who has been relegated to a footnote as a failure (for various reasons) in both Mexican and United States historiography, serves as the spine for the first half of *A World Not to Come*. This narrative decision allows Coronado to move in a seemingly effortless way along multiple thematic trajectories of his argument. Though scholars have been perennially interested in the circulation of revolutionary ideas across the Atlantic world and have more recently focused on the spread of such ideas throughout the Americas, I don't know of anyone who has brought the kind of texture and sophistication that he does in his early chapters to the study of communication networks and intellectual circuits in revolutionary Spanish America. As he observes of a series of incendiary Spanish-language radical pamphlets printed in early Philadelphia and subsequently smuggled into Texas, a "discursive history of these texts, describing the conditions of possibility that allowed for them to flourish, would go a long way towards offering an alternative model of modernity as it unfolded in the Americas" (8). Rarely has "discursive history" or book history made such fascinating reading.

The history that Coronado plots, drilling deep at certain moments and going backward at others, offers a powerful challenge to more traditional chronologies. (Can we really be reading an extended discussion about natural law and the thirteenth century at the exact midpoint of a book about the nineteenth century [*World* 222]?) Though the dissertation displayed little of this kind of plotting, the idea was there: "The challenge for Chicana/o literary historians," he wrote (after citing Gruesz's recent work) "is to write a non-teleological history that does not set out to arrange the literary archive only to reaffirm the long history of Chicana/o resistance" ("Competing American Colonial Modernities" 22). Needed was a history that apprehended the

meaning of the experience of the past for the present but that didn't automatically find the present in the past. "Texas Mexicans could not have foreseen during the 1850s their complete displacement, colonization, and racialization," he wrote in 2004. "Post-war Texas must have been seen as a site of great possibilities," but "this indeed was a fleeting moment, one that would ultimately fail to take hold" (23–24). Here, in perhaps its earliest articulation, was the historical topic to which he would commit himself: the idea of a world not to come.

Coronado's history focuses on overlapping identities and interstitial terrains, and so it is perhaps no accident that Coronado took great pains to write a book accessible to different kinds of readers—accessible but never ingratiating. To be sure, the book makes a distinct intervention in and contribution to the field of Latino literary studies, but it does so largely without the kind of polemic that animated the first third of his dissertation. The book, sitting as it does in the American literature section of libraries, has not yet registered in ways it should for historians. But it will.¹

Producing an important book like *A World Not to Come* takes creativity and imagination, archival serendipity and institutional support, and it takes time and patience. There's no recipe for writing an important book, and the lessons I have drawn out here may strike readers as simplistic and banal. (They are—but then how many of us follow them?) Still, if we expand archives, ask

big questions, and tell good stories, our work might help remake the world.

NOTE

1. I'm surprised not to see *A World Not to Come* cited, for instance, in two works of 2015: Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost* and Caitlin Fitz's article "The Hemispheric Dimensions of Early U.S. Nationalism." The online roundtable on the USIH (U.S. Intellectual History) site released in May 2015 should help make Coronado's book more visible to historians.

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Communing with
the Past

RAÚL CORONADO

I SPENT MUGGY CHICAGO SUMMERS INDOORS, TAPPING AT MY KEYBOARD, CHURNING OUT PAGES OF MY BOOK MANUSCRIPT, FOLLOWING the paths of people's lives, obsessing over the right turn of phrase. When I grew lonely (which I always inevitably did), I'd head out to the Starbucks on Wilson and Magnolia, comforting myself with the sounds of people around me. I wrote better late at night, when night had descended and lulled everyone to sleep. I felt then a great sense of relief, tranquility, buoyed by nothing else but the swirl of ideas, because everyone around me in my world had settled down for the night. It was then that I was not distracted by the world of the living. Summer in Chicago, after all, was an exuberantly social season. The city exploded with life; throngs of runners would peel their shirts off in the humid heat as they sprinted along Lakefront Trail. But for me, invitations to barbecues, beach parties, and weekend getaways to Saugatuck were left unanswered: I had my book to write.

Writing is an incredibly lonely process, and yet the act of placing word next to word, building narrative and argument to seduce the reader, produces in me profoundly powerful, almost spiritual moments of fullness.¹ In those moments when I was all alone, having spent hours indoors, whether summer or winter, the chastened lover or friend chased away, at times—many times—when I was able to string words together in a beautiful balancing act of symmetry, I would experience some of my most joyous, illuminating moments of insight and intimate connection with the world around me.

I use the blatantly autobiographical "I" because in many ways my former colleague, Eric Slauter, is right in recognizing that "the origins of [my] project are deep and personal."² I'd like to make that observation more explicit, not to dwell on the self but to flesh out the unabashedly humanistic aspects of my work that connect the personal to the social, the immanent to the transcendent, to examine those fleeting moments of fullness. After all, as Eric's and my former adviser once noted, "Every dissertation is an autobiography." And so, too, every book.

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I explain at the end of my book's acknowledgments how being with my family and loved ones brought to life the ideas I had lingered over, spending innumerable hours dissecting connotations, tracing etymologies, unweaving centuries of meaning making as these things had crisscrossed texts. Writing the book was my attempt to understand from a variety of perspectives—historical, social, political, but ultimately existential, metaphysical, and spiritual—differences I had felt as a child traveling back and forth between Oak Cliff, the Mexican neighborhood in which I was raised in Dallas, and my dad's ranch on the outskirts of the small northern Mexican city of Matehuala.

Everything about Mexico I loved. As the sun would set and the family gathered in the kitchen, huddled around a kerosene lamp, I would relish the company of adults—my aunts, uncles, grandparents, parents—along with my sisters and cousins. The mixture of the finely powdered dry desert dirt, the smell of the day's heat ceding to the damp coolness of the night, and the charcoaled remains of mesquite filled the adobe kitchen. The lack of electricity forced us kids to play under the moonlight at night, the world brilliantly coming to life in shades of violet and gray. In the *rancho* I could escape with my sisters and cousins to the *milpa*, spend hours pretending to shepherd the *chivas*, surrounded by nothing but the sound of doves and baying of animals in the distance. In Mexico, there was nothing to distract us from the unfolding present: no television, no toys, no books. Our lives were structured by nature, punctuated by the mysterious, fantastic, religious ceremonies of the *posada* at Christmas, the annual celebration of someone's birth, or the disheartening death of a relative.

Returning to Dallas was always a deeply melancholic occasion. We'd leave at dawn in order to make the fourteen-hour drive back before nightfall. The two-lane dilapidated highways in Mexico competed with nature,

as panoramas of sprawling arid fields, valleys, and mountains threatened to snuff out the roads. Once in Texas, the mountains and cacti yielded to mesquite-filled plains. The pothole-filled highways in Mexico, whose edges disintegrated and merged with the engulfing desert, gave way to meticulously maintained, smooth freeways, measured perfectly by utility poles.

In Dallas, my childhood was measured by the rhythms of school, first at the primarily Mexican and African American James Bowie Elementary School. It was there that I was tracked into the honors program. It was at Bowie that I first encountered my first queer role model. Mr. McDougal was an inspiring teacher. It was also at that school that I first experienced the shocking cognitive dissonance of what I can now describe in hindsight as racism. Learning that I had applied to the citywide honors magnet junior high school, Mr. McDougal expressed dismay and told me, more in a sharp admonition than as a reminder, that it would be very difficult for me. The seed of doubt began to germinate. The magnet school offered me a superb education, exposing me to worlds I had never known, possibilities I had never imagined, and rude awakenings that would haunt me for the rest of my life.

Out of a class of ninety, I was one of two Mexican Americans and among the poorest. I learned then that I was poor. That I was different and not like the other students was emblazoned across my skin, carved into my being. By the time I finished high school, the lessons of Texas-style racism had permanently lodged my "excuse me tongue" mentality, "my stumbling mind, . . . this / nagging preoccupation / with the feeling of not being good / enough," as Lorna Dee Cervantes painfully writes in her poem (5). High school English teachers, notwithstanding the A's I had received the year before, forced my mother to sign waivers, absolving themselves of responsibility if I failed the honors English courses in which she and I had demanded they allow me to

enroll. (No wonder I was the only person in my AP English course to opt out of taking the exam. And no wonder I would later become a professor of English.) On graduating, I fled to the University of Texas, Austin, to escape the dehumanizing racist, homophobic world of suburban Dallas.

The early 1990s witnessed the culmination of the culture wars, manifested at UT with the election of the first black lesbian feminist as student body president. My English high school teachers and the antimulticultural forces at UT may have insisted that we “*lack[ed] imagination*.” But Cherrie Moraga was right. “*No. I lack[ed] language*.” At UT, the promulticultural forces offered me a “*language to clarify / my resistance to the literate*” (Moraga 54–55). Sandra Cisneros’s voice rang so intimately familiar; David Montejano’s history traced my mother’s childhood farmworker itineraries. At UT, I learned that the personal had always been political. I came to thrive in the world of queer, feminist Chicana/o student activism, meeting Louis Mendoza, an English graduate student who, when I asked him what on earth one did with a PhD, told me that one spent one’s life reading, teaching, and writing. A new world had spilled open for me.

In graduate school I forced myself to develop well-thought-out arguments as to why nineteenth-century Chicana/o literary history mattered. Yet in the Stanford world of high culture, not even the one-minute version of my argument would attract enough attention from most professors: they absolved themselves of curiosity, relegating my project to the foreign world of “ethnic studies,” something that had nothing to do with them or the universality they and their ideas embodied. It was not until I received a Fulbright to write my dissertation in Mexico City that I finally arrived at a completely different understanding of myself and my place in the world. There, in that spectacular metropolis, completely unlike the rural Mexico I had known

as a child, I began to transform. At UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), I described my research interests, prepared to cut myself off after the one-minute version was done, only to find there was genuine interest in my project. Even more personal and profound was that my racialized sense of self began to fracture.

The Fulbright afforded me access to a solidly middle-class lifestyle. I was comparatively fair-skinned, living the life of the mind, writing solitarily throughout the day, escaping in the evenings to cultural events and the queer nightlife. I was no longer a working-class Mexican American kid; I had become (more of) a universal subject, part of the dominant world of privilege. I returned to Stanford and the United States with a newly minted sense of entitlement, a new perspective on what it meant to belong to the Americas, to be of Mexican origin, to be born and raised in the United States, and to not allow others’ provincial, backward ideas to restrict my aspirations.

More than ever, I felt the contingencies of race. In the United States, biology had been destiny; in Mexico, everything became topsy-turvy. In the United States, the paranoia of racism had tripped me up; in Mexico, I came to relish the vibrant intellectual life of the Americas. Yet, the inequities that percolated around me in Mexico now reminded me of my previous life. It was an ironic world, in which Chicanas/os had not always been victims, in which they too had inherited vexed, complicated legacies.

I wanted to wipe the slate clean. Rather than begin with the moment of conquest and colonization (and consequently with resistance), that is, rather than begin with the aftermath of the United States–Mexico War, I wanted to understand nineteenth-century Spanish Americans, who became only ostensibly Mexican after independence in 1821 and who would become American after 1846; I wanted to understand them from their point of view, on their own terms, and understand

the world they wanted to bring into being before the master narrative of United States-style colonization warped and erased those dreams.

My search for the past, this desire to string events into a historical narrative that has closure and offers analysis or a “moralizing” conclusion is, as Hayden White has insistently reminded us, a search for authoritative meaning, for a “fullness of which we can only imagine, never experience” (21). This fullness was not unrelated to the equanimity I intuitively felt as a child in Mexico.

But that goal was always elusive. As I began writing my dissertation, my voice floundered in a sea of authority, losing purpose and direction—that is, until I took a writing course with Moraga, who urged her students to return to their own sources of pleasure and anguish, to put into words what was most true, and most elusive, for them.

Moraga had already theorized, in 1983, this process of coming to consciousness. “I lack language,” she writes in her poem “It’s the Poverty.” “Words are a war to me. / They threaten my family. / To gain the word to describe the loss, / I risk losing everything” (54–55). The poem’s narrator rejects her Anglo lover’s suggestion to give up her well-worn typewriter ribbon in favor of a new one. But the narrator refuses to discard the ribbon, realizing that doing so would lead her to abandon the linguistic-cultural history from which she emerges. In effect, the ribbon serves as a symbol for the historically complex, if completely devalued, lives of Mexican Americans.

For Moraga, the greatest risk in meaning making is using an epistemological framework divorced from her culture’s history, yielding “a monster, / the word’s length and body / swelling up colorful and thrilling / looming over my *mother*, characterized. / Her voice in the distance / *unintelligible illiterate*” (55). The task, the poem suggests, is to remain with what is present, to dive deep into the specificity of her and her culture’s experiences, to not force theories onto her analysis of who she is.

The 1980s witnessed a wave of queer Chicana/o public intellectuals reflecting on the process of writing and coming to consciousness. Along with Moraga, Richard Rodriguez and Gloria Anzaldúa plumbed the depths of subject formation, highlighting the ways language produced their understanding of themselves. Their words offered me succor, especially as Moraga, Rodriguez, and Anzaldúa fleshed out the painful, productive processes of emerging from working-class Mexican communities, yearning to understand themselves, their worlds, and who they could become.

Rodriguez in particular describes this process as a shift from experiencing fullness in the intimacy of his working-class Mexican American family to the sense of communion he feels through the sublime, solitary act of writing for a public. The poignant aural opening of *Hunger for Memory* conjures up the sonorous life of interstitial beingness where the sounds of Spanglish spoken at home produced comforting, lulling states of intimate transcendence:

Some nights, no one seemed willing to loosen the hold sounds had on us. . . . [W]e happily sounded that military drum roll, the twirling roar of the Spanish *r*. Family language: my family’s sounds. The voices of my parents and sisters and brother. Their voices insisting: *You belong here. We are family members. Related. Special to one another. Listen!* (17)

Rodriguez also felt this sense of intimacy and belonging in the Latin mass, where inner beauty was cultivated in a sea of communion: “[T]he sounds of Latin would sometimes blur my attention to induce an aimless drift inward. But then I would be called back by the priest’s voice . . . to public prayer, the reminder that an individual has the aid of the Church in his life” (105). The intricate weaving of beauty and intimacy, of transcendence and immanence, of Communion and the buffered self (to borrow Taylor’s term [*Secular Age* 27–41]) crystalized during Rodriguez’s working-class Mexican-American Catholic childhood. Hear-

ing and experiencing the sounds and rituals of Catholic mass with his family produced “impossible riches. I remember wanting to cry out with joy, to shout.” And then, after mass, outside church, his mother would simply say, “It was very nice today. . . . It makes you feel good, the beautiful music and everything.’ That was all that she said. It was enough” (107).

Hunger of Memory elegantly paints this picture of collective fullness only to mourn its passing. Like Rodriguez, I have romanticized my childhood memories of intimacy. But he goes a step further: self-consciously using the pastoral mode to narrate his childhood memories allows him to both idealize and eulogize them as idyllic experiences that were pregnant with meaning but, because he sees assimilation as irreversible, are experiences that must be abandoned.

Rodriguez, however, is on to something. If the intimate, private experience of being (sounding) working-class Mexican American has receded for him, he has turned, in the solitary process of writing, to the solace that the public world of ideas brings him. A few years after *Hunger of Memory* was published, Anzaldúa confessed she too experienced that solitary, cathartic process: “I need to be alone, or in a sensory-deprived state” (92). Comparing the process of writing to a festering, embedded cactus needle, Anzaldúa has

to do something to put an end to the aggravation and to figure out why I have it. I get down into the place where it’s rooted in my skin and pluck away at it . . . , making it worse before it can get better. Then it comes out. That’s what the writing process is for me, an endless cycle of making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of the experience.

For her, writing “feels like I’m creating my own face, my own heart. . . . My soul makes itself through the creative act” (95). For Rodriguez, writing “heightens the feelings of privacy. They permit the most thorough and careful exploration.” The solitary act of writing

forces him to describe feelings and thoughts to another person. That is, “only because of that reader did the words come to the page. The reader became my excuse, my reason for writing” (203). One writes (I write) to sublimate this beingness onto this page, through these words. But in doing so, in “describ[ing] one’s feelings, one can describe oneself to oneself. One names what was previously only darkly felt” (Rodriguez 203). We write into existence what we sense, feel, believe.

Before, Rodriguez did not need words (experience “was enough”). Before, one was surrounded and buoyed by the interstitial beingness of the intimate family. But now the personal loneliness of words written for a public audience has taken its place. Rodriguez’s revelatory, if troubling, binary of private and public delineates the nuanced differences in experiencing fullness even as Rodriguez mourns the demise of familial intimacy in favor of the “deeply personal in public life” (200). His binary is given in the form of a coming-of-age narrative, as a story of inevitable change from one fullness to another, rather than as an analysis, much as Moraga and Anzaldúa offer, or theorization of multiple forms of experiencing fullness.

“Intimacy,” Rodriguez tells us, “is not trapped within words. It passes through words. It passes” (40). For all three writers, language has the power to tap into and release the deep, vigorous sources of feeling, spirit, soul. Yet the syntax here is somewhat, albeit significantly, imprecise.

It is not so much that language taps into and releases but that it becomes the source from which fullness emerges.³ We may believe that language helps us touch the soul, just as we think that it helps us reconstruct the past as it happened. We think of it as an objective, transparent tool to describe our inner lives, our social world, or what actually unfolded in the past. But language does not touch what seems outside itself; it is not a tool that merely describes the world (interior and

exterior). Rather, it creates our sense of transcendence, of spirit, the universal. Yet to say that language produces our world is far from saying that our world is a plaything, radically contingent or relative. Our world is entangled in specific histories that are in turn enmeshed in larger webs of signification.⁴

This was the approach I took in my book. I wanted to historicize how communities have experienced what Jacques Derrida describes as a metaphysics of presence. Where most associate this concept with a relativist approach to thinking of the self and of knowledge, I take his patiently elaborated concept as a meticulous historical project that traces how philosophers have yearned to achieve this state of being, one obsessed with foundations and origins, as a concept that refers to our desire for logos, “of that which makes possible an absolutely pure and absolutely self-present self-knowledge” (98). The history of writing, of knowledge, is the history of grammatology, a search for the origin of meaning and beingness.

My book is a history not of literature, as Anna Brickhouse notes, but of textuality. Although I take and much appreciate Eric’s point in claiming that “human beings rather than texts are the characters of [my] work”—that is, that I spent time developing a narrative voice in order “to tell a dramatic story” even while relying “so heavily on the close reading of texts”—I would say my book seeks to navigate the narrow interstitial space between human beings and the traces they have left behind.

What I am after is the history of how communities have sought to produce these moments of beauty, of transcendence (through communion), of immanence (through insightful, introspective reflection), of how the material effects of the consolidation of power and of domination congealed into voices of authority.⁵ This sense of beauty and wonder, in our contemporary moment, is poignantly felt in the embodied self, but there are many ways, contemporary and historical, of experiencing this fullness.

A lesson I learned in writing my book is that the sense of presence is always already elusive. It emerges between inner reflection and outer communion. There is no stable source, no stable origin. The sense of presence or fullness is diffuse, appearing for a moment before waning. It passes. Like life—like our lives—it emerges, flourishes, and soon vanishes, giving way to new forms, new temporary experiences of equanimity, compassion, pleasure, pain, turmoil, and witnessing. These too, with time, will cede space to other passing moments of presence, of being. In our precariously solipsistic era of the self, the excruciating question to be learned from Derrida’s history is whether we can make peace with this radical contingency.

Why history? Indeed, as Kirsten Silva Gruesz asks, why write intellectual history and not write more in the vein of speculative history? What we need, to echo her essay “Utopía Latina,” is a philosophy of history (57, 59). More specifically, we need to know what function history fulfills. Why do we need one version of history (e.g., social or political) more than another (e.g., intellectual or speculative)? “What wish is enacted,” asks White, “what desire is gratified, by the fantasy that real events are properly represented when they can be shown to display the formal coherency of a story” (4)?

This desire to fix meaning authoritatively, to access the real and turn it “into an object of desire,” the ability to definitively point to evidence and claim that, say, in 1813 Texas declared itself independent for the first time as a republic, is one of the defining characteristics of historical narrative. White reminds us that it was Hegel who first conceptualized “historical self-consciousness, the kind of consciousness capable of imagining the need to represent reality as a history,” as something that was fundamentally rooted in “law, legality, and legitimacy” (14). We may extend the argument and say that insofar as historical narrative is plotted along verifiable sources,

the more securely will it serve as ontological authority, as the true story of who we are.

In writing my book, I sought to place emphasis not so much on events or people as on traces of presence that I perceived in a piece of writing. These traces were embedded in material and symbolic webs of meaning that inscribed and circumscribed the conditions of possibility that had produced the piece of writing. What was required, then, was a history of these conditions even as I sought to unpack the webs of meaning in the document. That is, I realized that I needed to produce a narrative history that could account for the production of documents in order to then delve into their complexity of meaning. It demanded a balancing act: I had to authoritatively fix meaning, narratively produce an origin (even as I placed that origin in scare quotes), on the one hand, and accept contingency, on the other.

Those moments when my book seeks to take a panoramic view of the events unfolding, especially to summarize fields unknown to specialists (the complex world of Late Scholasticism, the ways in which the French Protestant-Catholic conflict served Spanish America as a useful lesson on its path to modernity, or the consequences of literacy in the Protestant and Catholic worlds), have been criticized by some reviewers.⁶ I do not completely disagree with their points of contention; I do sidestep rather complex, sometimes contradictory discourses in my perhaps too carefully bifurcated binaries, especially as they follow the lines of Catholic versus Protestant.

Ralph Bauer's suggestion that José Álvarez de Toledo's invoking of "Motesuma" in the 1811 broadside should be read as creole patriotism is wonderful but in no way contradicts my reading of the broadside as using Catholic political philosophy (Coronado 229–37). Tamar Herzog appears to misread my project as one that engages with metropolitan intellectuals from, say, Mexico City rather than those from the periphery of Spanish America.

This misreading leads her to claim that the more informative approach to postcolonial Spanish Americans is not to posit a Catholic, communal Spanish America against a Protestant, individualistic Anglo America but to ask whether Spanish Americans considered the break between colonial rule and national independence an example of continuity or of rupture. It was certainly a question of continuity versus rupture for the metropolises of Spanish America but most certainly not for those who lived in the territory that would become the United States Southwest. Likewise, characterizing the postrevolutionary political culture of the United States as "herald[ing] continuity" with its British past is simply wrong.⁷ Sandra Gustafson suggests that a comparative (as opposed to a contrastive) mode would have highlighted possible similarities in the political philosophical histories of Spanish America. As with Herzog, her suggestion might apply to the metropolises of the Americas but reaches its limit in the context of the materials I studied.

Insofar as my primary concern was historicizing textuality as it was produced or circulated in Texas, the larger epistemological contexts of religious difference manifested themselves in Texas in the way I narrated them. But overall I accept the justice of their critique: I should have been more cautious with religious binaries. Binaries or broad characterizations are useful in pushing thought in new directions. Although we need binaries to make sense of the world, the moment those categories of analysis become facile stereotypes, reducing rather than elucidating, they cease to aid understanding.

Whether my history is successful or not, we need to continue to write new histories with which we can cathect. If we are to reimagine our present in order to produce more utopic projects for the future, a future that most certainly will become ever more diverse, a future where in many places people of color are already in the majority, then we need to

write more effective histories of the present. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot eloquently writes, we need histories that can simultaneously record the conflicting, melancholic accounts of conquest, slavery, and genocide and offer our public a means to imagine and ultimately redress “present injustices for which previous generations only set the foundations” (150).

How, in other words, should we alter the way we narrate the story of our imagined communities so as to inspire us to work toward more utopic futures?⁸ Will histories continue to be written according to the template of the nation? Will yet more revisionist histories of the American Renaissance speak to our transforming present? We need, as Gyan Prakash has written, more postfoundational histories that insist on “mak[ing] cultural forms and even historical events contingent . . . [in order to] write those histories that history and historiography have excluded” (401). What will emerge then will be not redeeming subjects, not the origins of prelapsarian universes, but instead human subjects, full of contradictions, and new worlds as baffling to us as ours would be to them.

Reading the harrowing 1813 account of the captured Spanish-Texan revolutionary women at the hands of sadistic Spanish royal soldiers has expanded my horizons of what it means to be human, to be a witness, and to write with empathy, with a more capacious understanding of what it means to flourish (Coronado 417–33). I knew the “Memoria” dealt with the aftermath of the revolution, so in my effort to finish the writing quickly I waited to read the document until I wrote the bulk of the material on the revolution (213–48). But on reading the document, I was paralyzed. For days I could not write. I mourned. I shared the story with my sister and my mother, who listened to me in between sobs. (They, too, helped me produce the book, one of my sisters drawing the gorgeously illustrated maps and my mother helping me overcome writer’s block when I could

not figure out what to do with Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara’s travel account. “Tell me why you think it’s important,” she told me over a birthday dinner in Oak Cliff. I went on to write four chapters about Gutiérrez de Lara.)

The process of close reading is, as I wrote in the conclusion, “at once aesthetic and spiritual. It is an act of recognizing another person’s vision of his or her world, and the manner in which another has sought to achieve that most basic sense of transcendence” (393–94). Archival work, close reading, and writing narrative history can, at times, produce in me a transcendent sense of communing with the past, with those, like me, who sought to make meaning in and of their lives.

Yet the truth is that this process of writing does nothing for them. The women who were tortured, beaten, and raped and who wrote their account “so that the public may know the truth” (425) were quickly forgotten, passed over by historians who deemed their account insignificant and relegated it to the dustbin of history. The women have been long dead. The words I—we—write are not for them but for us, not about them but about us. Even if I imagine this communion with the past, the words I write serve to augment only our world today. But it is here that the sense of presence brightens with intensity, since the moment of the present—the desire to produce a more capacious, expansive world beyond the bodily experience of our solipsistic desires—is future-oriented. We write hoping that the future will feel as much compassion for us as we do for our forebears. We may thus imagine that someday someone will heed our words, desire to commune with us, with our desires and trepidations, and, in doing so, expand our cosmos, our sense of humanity.

NOTES

1. In what follows, I draw on Taylor’s elaboration of “fullness” (*Secular Age* 4–14).

2. Behar's desire to critically weave her subjectivity into her scholarship has shaped my work (1–33).

3. Taylor recently elaborated this point in *The Language Animal*.

4. The elusive question of social-intellectual change, its causes and effects, is what leads Philip Lorenz to enquire into my use of the concept of "rupture" as a reference to the radical, epistemic break Spanish Americans experienced in their relation to writing. I would agree with Lorenz and insist that these ruptures are "the outcome of complex collective institutional and social processes."

5. For a moving, beautifully written account of how black communities in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean sought to produce a sense of belonging in the aftermath of the Haitian revolution, see Johnson.

6. See, respectively, Bauer; Herzog; and Gustafson (in this issue).

7. See, e.g., Jehlen (1–21), Fliegelman (174–267), and Elliott (369–400). It is unfortunate, and perhaps telling, that none of the PMLA reviewers of my book is a Latin Americanist.

8. For a compelling argument on the need to find new ways to narrate our past, see Scott; for the need to imagine utopias for our future, see Muñoz.

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little-known documents

Letters to the Editor,
1963–69

LARRY EIGNER

INTRODUCTION BY GEORGE HART

Introduction

LARRY EIGNER (1927–96) WROTE OVER THREE THOUSAND POEMS, NOW AVAILABLE IN THE FOUR-VOLUME *COLLECTED POEMS OF LARRY EIGNER*, edited by Curtis Faville and Robert Grenier. Although not as widely known as many of his fellow poets, Eigner was included in Donald Allen's seminal *The New American Poetry, 1945–1960*. His early work appeared in Cid Corman's *Origin* and in the *Black Mountain Review*, among other prominent journals that promoted postmodern poetry, and his first book, a small collection of poems titled *From the Sustaining Air*, was published by Robert Creeley's Divers Press in 1953. Early advocates of his work included William Carlos Williams, Denise Levertov, and Robert Duncan, and he was embraced as a literary forebear by language poets such as Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, and Ron Silliman, who dedicated the first anthology of language poetry, *In the American Tree*, to Eigner. These associations—Black Mountain poetics and language poetry—indicate Eigner's commitment to radical experimentation with poetic form, and they place him directly in one of the significant lines of postmodern American poetry.

Eigner's adaptation of Charles Olson's projective verse has also attracted interest from the field of disability studies (Davidson; Hart; Luck). A forceps injury Eigner sustained during his birth left him with cerebral palsy, which affected his speech, mobility, and coordination. As a result, he typed his poems, stories, and letters on a manual typewriter (given to him as a bar mitzvah gift) with the thumb and index finger of his right hand. The combination of his projectivist poetics and his disability makes the typewriter central to his work. Eigner's poems usually move down the page from the far left margin to the far right, creating a fluid, sinuous shape, in part because it was difficult for him to return the carriage to the left margin consistently but also because projectivist poetics uses the page as a spatial field for composition. Most of his letters are densely typed and single-spaced, and Eigner often filled the margins with additional comments and afterthoughts, and he sometimes inserted poems into any blank space available. *The Collected Poems of Larry Eigner* includes a selection of facsimiles of Eigner's typescripts so that readers may see what Curtis Faville, in his appendix to the collection, calls "the text as an

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image of itself." The typewriter, Faville explains, was "the key 'prosthetic' link between Larry's disabled body and the universe of print media, facilitating his participation in it, while gratifying his hunger for contact and intellectual discourse" (xxxii).

Although disability partially determines Eigner's compositional practice and is therefore present in every text he created, it is not overtly featured in the subject matter of his poetry. As Michael Davidson observes, "Because Eigner himself seldom mentioned his disability during his lifetime, he poses a test case for thinking about impairment when it is not represented" (xx). For Davidson the material condition of Eigner's embodiment produces a "poetics of disability" that supplements the "politics of disability," which requires representations of the experience of disability. However, Eigner was explicit about his opinions on various other political and social concerns in his poetry. Since he was largely housebound, he spent a lot of time listening to the radio, watching television, and reading newspapers and magazines, responding in his poems and letters to what he heard, watched, and read. The topics of his poems range from weather and family life, art and music, and American history and literature to specific contemporary issues such as the civil rights movement and the war in Vietnam. One of his enduring concerns was the environment, not only conservation and pollution but also hunger, resource extraction, and global warming. As Benjamin Friedlander wrote in a note appended to a letter from Eigner to Ina Forster, "His goal was always to strike the right balance—Larry's poetics in a nutshell, and politics too. (His deeply felt response to the ecology movement is a rarely noted key to the work.)" The four letters presented here document Eigner's deep engagement with environmental issues during the 1960s, the decade that saw the birth of the modern environmental movement.

The earliest letter, to the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, responds to a column by John Rock called "Speaking Out," which appeared in the *Post* on 20 April 1963. Rock, a fertility specialist, wrote as both a physician and a Catholic in support of the newly developed oral contraceptive pill:

I have personally hoped that the recently developed oral pill, the first effective *physiologic* means of fertility control, would be accepted by the Catholic Church as a fully permissible method. The pill, a synthetic steroid, was developed by Drs. Gregory Pincus and M. C. Chang at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, before I became associated with the clinical aspects of this investigation. (14)

The same year this column appeared, Rock published *The Time Has Come: A Catholic Doctor's Proposal to End the Battle over Birth Control*. Whereas Rock concentrates on Catholic doctrine and the various positions held by clergy and theologians, situating the need for acceptable contraception in the context of Catholic family life and the expanding population, Eigner, instead of drawing on the Jewish tradition that he would have been familiar with, responds ecologically, linking birth control and population growth to hunger, waste, pollution, and animal rights.

The next letter, written to the editors of *Harper's* in June 1963, is a remarkable document of Eigner's ecological thinking. Responding to Carl Dreher's article "Martyrs on the Moon?," from the March 1963 issue of *Harper's*, Eigner not only comments on technology, population, and consumption but also integrates these ecological issues with ideas about the role of the imagination and with quotations from Wordsworth, Frost, and Williams. Eigner reacts in particular to Dreher's statement that

[t]he universe is man's business. Especially the solar system, which is probably as far as man in the flesh can ever go. Kipling's lines, "For to admire an' for to see / For to be'old this world so wide," are outdated. The world is no longer wide. If he has the money a man can traverse it in a matter of weeks or days, with no effort on his part and with airline stewardesses of various pigmentations, but all ravishing, ministering to his wants all the way. But in the solar system, airless and impersonally hostile, with death beating on the walls of the capsule every second, there is still room for adventure. For the vast majority of us the adventure will be vicarious, but we are willing to settle for that and to pay for it. (37)

starvation” and “Thoreau’s 2 or 3.” Whereas Whitman is a metonym for multitude, population, and the potential of Americans as a mass, Thoreau stands for the individual, the few, and simplicity. Most important, this binary is not static: just as Eigner cannot determine a fixed ratio between thought and action in the letter, neither do Whitman or Thoreau provide singular solutions for the problems Eigner contemplates. Even if we reduce our affairs to light and small things, like individual birds or snowflakes, they can still weigh down the branches. Or, even if we reduce the number of our concerns to as few as three—population, conservation, consumption—the “big problem” is that the ways of expressing them multiply when they are combined. And thinking in terms of numbers, as Whitman does in *Specimen Days* when he tallies the wounded he visited and assisted, does not guarantee an arrival at the meaning of collective action. Quoting from the section of *Specimen Days* in which Whitman counts the dead, “The Real War Will Never Get in the Books,” Eigner ends the poem about Whitman with these lines:

how much of importance is
buried in the grave
in eternal darkness (2: 709)

The last letter, to the editors of *Scientific American*, was prompted by an item in the magazine’s column “Science and the Citizen” in its March 1969 issue. The article, which cites Barry Commoner’s report to the American Association for the Advancement of Science on the environmental damage caused by nitrogen fertilizers, concludes that “[t]o impose limitations on the use of fertilizers would be to reduce food supplies at a time of mounting worldwide needs, as well as to engender fierce opposition from farmers and the chemical industry” (“Science” 48). In his letter Eigner proposes a solution to this “painful dilemma” that became a central part of his environmentalism—a national, weekly day of fasting that would save food resources and reduce the need for fertilizer.

It is likely that Eigner sent these letters to their intended recipients, but no acknowledgment of receipt from the editors has been found in Eigner’s pa-

pers held at the University of Kansas, and a search through the publications Eigner addressed his letters to has not located any published excerpts. The 18 May 1963 *Saturday Evening Post* did include two letters responding to Rock’s column (one pro, one con), but neither was Eigner’s. In a letter to Denise Levertov, dated 15 October 1963, Eigner reports that he did indeed send letters to *Harper’s* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. After copying a paragraph from Dreher’s article, Eigner writes, “This has seemed much like poetry to me, most of the time, however it is. Fleurs des Mal in the silence of Spring, and all. I sent *Harper’s* an awful 2100-word letter art[icle] on it.. O well. In same issue was an attack on a Congressman trying to encroach on conservation. So it goes.” Later in the letter, he writes:

I sent the 2 pp. seconding Dr Rock w idea Joe might send it to Dr Rock, might like to and be able to. Wife suggested i send it to Post as article rather than a letter, with a photograph. I did, and wrote a letter to editor saying I recognized it was harsh and so forth, sorta iconoclastic, but I’m not war-like way down, i recognizes it wd be harder for him to print than it was for me to write ahem .. still It came back with a reject slip and where it says the Post isnt in a position to accept unsolicited ideas (or the word may’ve bn original) underlined in editorial red. Wow! (?)²

One would assume that Eigner’s digressive and paratactic style would have made his letters hard to follow by the editors of mainstream publications such as *Harper’s* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Nonetheless, these valuable letters document Eigner’s emerging interest in contemporary environmental issues during one of his most productive decades.

NOTES

1. The title of Eigner’s letter comes from the song’s refrain:

O the buzzing of the bees in the cigarette trees
By the soda water fountain
Near the lemonade springs where the bluebird sings
On the Big Rock Candy Mountain.
 (“Big Rock Candy Mountain”)

2. “Joe” is Larry Eigner’s brother Joseph, a biochemist, and “Wife” is Eigner’s sister-in-law, Janet.

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Letters to the Editor, 1963–69

¶¶ 850 words ¶¶

April 25 ¶ - May 2nd ¶ 1963

Originally a note beginning On reading
“Speaking Out” of April 20th
¶ *Saturday Evening Post* ¶ . . .
this by Dr John Rock

Dear Sirs

On learning something more, recently, of the population raises and of the Shrewsbury pill it struck me that the Catholic Church is being pretty hard on humans, and the world—notwithstanding that in most, or all, fields, control and sport is as fine a thing as any, stopping at a red light is, and considerably necessary, also that I like tradition insofar, at least, as I believe in going slow (even as it appears I can’t really tell when it comes to traveling light / how much to reflect on?); since on one hand Catholicism frowns on contraceptives, at the same time that hetero- is the only type of sensuality it has deemed

valid, natural or whatever. Yet mankind is quite various in some ways from person to person, and society to society (it’s now recognized)—it’s kind of feasible to lay down laws of grammar and Aristotelian laws about what best befits bovines, or the ant, or ape, or to interpret modulate them, but perhaps impossible when you get to billions of men, even the cannibal. Their lives are very different

At first I thought other contraceptives might not be called less natural or unphysiologic than what Dr. Rock has been working with, but anyway physiologic is one level or degree or course or something, biochemical another which has been distinguished—exemplified right here I think—and what abortion is to infanticide, and contraception to abortion, so may the new drug be to older contraceptives, and malnourished babies, and grown-ups. It would scarcely be all to the good, of course, for it’s true that it’s like hiding all the light-switches behind the wall, or a lot of them, there is everywhere the ques-

tion of What is happiness, what is a painless life; and yet in many parts of the world there might very well be an extremity of pain, and a very small modicum of enjoying life—the latter, entertainment facilities and the like, on the decline, too.

Although, evidently, I can't be religious and can't see very final or special causes, Onan's action was in Biblical times a rather grave social crime, as for one thing you wanted the children to outpopulate the wolves, if not the sheep—and the smaller a population the more likely and of high proportion is a shortage of women or, especially, men (dream of the androgyne)—and clear on up through the¹ 19th century this was an issue, in quite a few places. Now, hardly so, the world is really drawn up close—and flying apart. If purposes are real, they do not scorn facts, and are ready to be changed by them, clearly and openly. But when facts, and things, are very numerous purposes are, and they go very fast, and for example it's conceivable we might regret birth control, in some years, by a shortage of nurses, or physicians, or physicists during those hours we think about keeping the bears away (having still the old problem of security among peers at any rate, rest of our lives, how much we need, and could enjoy, and where it lies, or we think it does).

It might also be brought in that the more or less immanent, impending waste-disposal problem, in however limited area-ways at present, as well as that of food and the drain on natural and supplemented capacity of earth in general (reasonably pure water, tourism—in callous form, quantities—the plunting of souls, eyes and ears, and so on, even beasticide in that to grow more plants you must allow fewer animals so—Brinksmanship!), has a basic relationship to size of population. The admirable Greeks and/or others committed not only infanticide and abandonment but also colonization too (early form of colonialism, they would beat, harness the natives if any, if they could, and it suited them). For

healthful reasons, and when in medieval days a city, town came to have too many people, be unwieldy it, also, split up, in an intentional way, and afterwards there was Columbus, New England and so forth, migrations of the Irish. Where as yet there is little likelihood of one potato in the moon, or space, or anything within reason, or distance, or poi. WE CAN ASSESS, and calculate the risk. Let not man be a locust, and drive out his fellows.

Nor, barring holocaust, inferno, disaster, overkill, critical mass, or till then, coming to happen in some particular detailed way perhaps, does it look as if various smogs or fallouts will redress the death rate (as regards the near future), in time to lower and stabilize the birth rate, that is, precisely enough to stay on a plateau. Despite all the bloodshed of the ages, man has kept growing.

thick.

(While state-wide planning of babies, with or without government agency, seems drastic, and nation-wide about as drastic as anything could be, perhaps equal to or even more than infanticide, and hemispheric more so, murderous, and global accordingly.)

—Larry Eigner
Swampscott, Mass.
§ 23 Bates Road §

*

The fewer billion people have to
do things the better, and this
includes contraception . . .

§ 143 & 9 lines 1720 words §
§§ The Cigaret Trees §§ §§ June 11 63 §§
§ or:
§§ To the Editors §§

Although his stand against race² § Harp-
er's, March § is a millimeter or more in the
right direction, Carl Dreher among others
displays an infatuation with self (anthropos—
"The universe is man's business" ! !) and the
treasure-hunt for experience per se, sensation,
that is more and more brutal and appalling—

the ultra Picaresque, a lust for life and adventure which is increasingly untempered by gentleness or love, hence any experience at all, blind therefore, self-destructing. Kipling can be taken perhaps as nicely as in his day, but he never was a Bible, he is outdated, as to a lesser extent Columbus is, he traveled for adventure and other, likely more cogent reasons as well; while the journeys there are traces of in myths resulted in benefit to the tribe, the heroes at any rate would rather have stayed home than go abroad, so the stories say—they didn't go to kill any more buffalo than necessary. If life on the airlines has reached the point of heavy dullness, that can only mean that the stewardesses should go back to their villages and towns, and the "man with . . . money"—or any man—might go back to one too, take a walk in the country, help learn how to fish more, be moderate and see to the preservation of fresh air, relatively pure food and drinking supplies, which among other things involves keeping the human population and traffic of a size low enough to allow other fauna to exist, which has to be not only in his stomach and eye, but his imagination too, that is, independently, at a distance; and for men themselves to exist, have room for their own middens, in their most congenial place. The imagination should not be snuffed out by too much furniture, though it often is. The bored airplane-rider should be aware of the birds far below him, who, for reason or not, are dying out on the branches. Because he traverses the earth, he has no right to be callous of it, or lord it. Rather, he should treat it the better, and do what he can for it, as he has drawn on it. And as long as anything dies, or is alive, how is the earth uninteresting? ~~Anyway, outside of the earth worms are far more possible than birds.~~ But he is more likely to find ants anywhere else in the solar system than birds, anyway. He should imagine the 60-foot trees and others, five times daily. He should take it on himself to imagine the dead of World War II, as they were living, and those of the India-Pakistan

Civil War. He cannot sufficiently imagine the transactions of a thousand cities, and their roofs, or even the angles of all the buses, or the children (he should not overlook them, certainly) playing on the steps. Too much. Or even if he succeeded just as to imagination, and there was nothing that needed repairing and upkeep, there would be more than too much, too many things would be actual,—serious, business. But a matter of degree of course. Quite true, life wouldn't be so pleasant if Faraday and Edison had only day-dreamed. But some things, ultimately, and according to the day, should not be puffed up in and beyond the imagination. The imagined and the real, the present state of things, should always be held in roughly the same boat.

Better than to know is to balance, often enough, or be healthy, while the balancing does take considerable knowledge. And a chance discovery in one field has often made another fruitful, which has just been impossible before, or rather invisible to men's eyes, but just the same "Science," or scientists, being earthbound, must stop going off in all directions at once, must get into some human order, things have been tightened up so much that, unfortunately, there is very little room for free play, science is much less a game nowadays (for one thing it is by now compounded with technology, and so, of the same piece, speculation, and research—any research—or the lack of it, has very immediate impact on the physical environment) than it is very serious business. (From the human point of view, incidentally, or rather, for survival of a greater or lesser number of people, the oldest science of the spectrum, astronomy, is the least vital, and anyway is now practically a branch of the next science, physics.) Science as a whole must be centered on the earth, and ecology for instance should be more in men's minds than astronomy. Astronomy is more spectacular (not more intricate), so this brings me to the point that the more men there are the more they all have to be spartan philosophers, or scientists,

¶¶ As, for one thing,
I'd better admit,
in fairness, one man's
asphodel may be
another man's lotus, et al ¶¶

—L Eigner
Swampscott, Mass.

*Manpower, technical power,
or whatever How many cities in how many
lands might someday really be able to have an
atomic power plant ? Oil burners ? Such ques-
tions from being metaphysical have become
historical, no less.

L Eigner

¶¶ Recent concerns ¶¶ Apr 16 66 ¶¶ Senator Full-
bright I think basically right in saying it's not
Communism the U.S. has to fear but aggres-
sion. And it's not too significant if the Chinese
dream of Africa and/or La .. America or the
world, or if the Russians and others are repelled
by them. There are graver matters than ideolo-
gies (always are in quite a number of senses—
for instance Roger Williams had it religion
should not be enforced aboard ship), such that
the Maoists can be taken as not more insane
than Hitler and without dreams of firestorm-
ing the earth. If Chou-En-Lai could somehow
be brought to take over from Mrs Gandhi of
India, say, where reportedly 1,000,000 slowly
starving people bed down in the streets of Cal-
cutta at night, and fight for places on the inad-
equate public transportation system in order to
get "home" (to give one example)—then China
wd become a different type of problem. Ca-
nadian wheat would become insufficient, and
besides foodstuffs we could export some TVA
systems to China as well as Vietnam and India
(for one thing a good back-up in the event we
miss the moon). As things are, though, I wish
somewhere was some computer that could tell
us when and how to un-dock from Vietnam
and stop destroying crops and killing people.

Even Newport, diminished as may be, is
still a live town, let alone Harlem and Watts;

and thinking of rich/poor nations, I won-
der if Keynes cd do as well as Gemini with a
computer. Or Bertrand Russell or someone.
Plato opted for ph-kings. Do we need ph-cits
[citizens?] or poets? Whitman had this idea
millions of men could be company rather
than just "crowds upon the pavement". Not
so Thoreau, who said: "Simplicity, simplic-
ity, simplicity! . . . let your affairs be as two
or thrèe, and not a hundred or a thousand . . .
and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail
In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized
life . . . a man . . . must be a great calcula-
tor indeed who succeeds. . . . Instead of . . . a
hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things
in proportion. Our life is like a German Con-
federacy, made up of petty states, . . ."

There are times for living, or let's say
purposeful action according to a more or
less home-grown, tribe-grown or else eclectic
code (Thoreau, Dante, Don Quixote)—and
times for contemplation of the world, which
includes the self. A passage in Ginsberg's Kad-
dish,—where after mourning or remembering
his mother, "gone without corsets and eyes,"
he says, "Nameless, One Faced, Forever, be-
yond me, beginningless, endless, Father in
death .." (New American Poetry, p. 198, Ever-
green)—brings to mind again degrees of the
personal/impersonal%,³ projections of self, in
the 3 or 4 monotheistic anthropomorphic #
sects: Buddhism might be as much polytheist
as otherwise, for all I know. Ikons,.. idols (Gk
image, phantom, from idein, to see, which is
the root word of idea also—this etymology
being 1 indication that vision is the predomi-
nant sense in mankind, besides the fact that
the visual area of the cortex is the largest at
least of the sensory areas, hand going with eye
(and to no other region are "impulses deliv-
ered with so little delay or pass so few senti-
nels", states G.A.Dorsey in Why We Behave
Like Human Beings, a bk published in 1925),
and the tendency, even slight compulsion, to
visualize, as people heard on phone or radio,

[cigaret trees]

-3-

~~quassia~~ any better, to speak of, and keep them valuable. I can't tell what might, being ~~at~~ anyway a man who can't become competent in anything, except ^{possibly a} few outlines. But socialism for instance--or ~~■~~ ~~repossessing rather than~~ on the whole a cooperative rather than a competitive way of reaping and constructing things,--such as the Navahoes, ^{have, or had--if} say, ~~have~~ carried out some ways or others, might, ~~conceivably~~, not turn people into sloths or dinosaurs, while not developing the harsher drives.)

It does in fact seem as though we had better try to gather ourselves, that we are going downhill with our belongings. Maybe we can't even afford to give much attention to the chances Russia might get a masser onto the moon,--or Venus, or Mars, if we get there first--or bounce ~~an n-~~beam off it, for however ^{lethal} indiscriminately, or subtle strategic purposes; as little as we can afford one or two more high-stake fail-safe quiz programs and excess followed by psychiatric lore, mescaline exploration, etc.. A crazy world, despite the fact that I guess it always was.

" Every drill

driven into the earth
for oil enters my side
also "

"

Look at

what passes for the new.

|| both quotes
from William

Carlos Williams:

"Asphodel, that
Greeny Flower"||

You will not find it there but in
despised poems.

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack

|| As, for one thing, of what is found there. "

I'd better admit,

in fairness, one man's

asphodel may be

another man's lotus, et al ||

-- L Eigner
Swampscott, Mass.

* Manpower, technical power,
or whatever How many cities in how many lands might someday really
be able to have an atomic power plant ? Oil burners ? Such questions from
being metaphysical have become historical,--no less.

while we're less inclined to imagine voices of people seen in phone-booths or what records seen in a store might play); and without imagery, Wallace Stevens thought, the center could not hold, which was a thesis of B Berenson too, I guess. ¶ All this writing, and talk ¶ But we have to live not only in the

the past, present, future
to live

eternity perhaps
another thought

way of life

sleep, the plain thing,
and the death ¶ lost
to come in it

I say, a moving wood to
lie quiet

present (in enough of it, which is impossible if we're too personal or anyway introvert or perhaps selfish, egotistical or hard-up), but also the past and (least of all, it had better be, probably—or how fast does life go?) future, and different times come together in memory, all sorts of times. And it could be that any time is for thought, if we can manage it—while nostalgia and thinking in narrow circles isn't much compared to action or physical work. Or the circle might get too broad, and "the balloon of the mind" too big for the earth.

¶¶ In the introductory ch. to Character and Opinion in the United States, "The Moral Background," which I've come across just after writing this, Santayana remarks that the Hebrews pursued material comfort,—milk and honey, yes, and this is what may have led them to stress the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, at that—whereas "Socrates and his disciples admired

this world, but they did not particularly covet it, or wish to live long in it, or expect to improve it; what they cared for was an idea or a good . . . expressed in it, something outside it and timeless, in which the contemplative intellect might be literally absorbed. . . . Plato . . . assures us . . . the intestines are long . . . that we may have leisure between meals to study philosophy. Curiously enough, the very enemies of final cause sometimes catch this infection and attach absolute values to facts in an opposite sense and in a human interest; and you often hear in America that whatever is is right. . . . and thus we oscillate between egotism and idolatry. . . . Without suggesting for a moment that the proper study of mankind is man only—for it may be landscape or math ..—we may safely say that their proper study is what lies within their range and is interesting to them. . . . subjectivity is not in all respects an evil; it is a warm purple dye. . . ."

And earlier: "Eloquence is a republican art, as conversation is an aristocratic one. . . . In the form of oratory reflection, rising out of the problems of action, could be tuned to guide or to sanction action, and sometimes could attain, in so doing, a notable elevation of thought. Although Americans, and many other people, usually say that thought is for the sake of action, it has evidently been in these high moments, when action became incandescent in thought, that they have been most truly alive, intensely most active, and although doing nothing, have found at last that their existence was worthwhile. Reflection is itself a turn, and the top turn, given to life. . . . Every animal has his festive and ceremonious moments . . ."

¶¶¶ Copyright Charles Scribner's Sons ¶¶¶

¶¶

¶¶ And Mark Twain suggested importing American Missionaries from China to bring

out the anti-lynch spirit from the people. "The Chinese are universally conceded to be excellent people, honest, industrious, trustworthy, kind-hearted and all that—leave them alone, they are plenty good enough just as they are, and besides, almost every convert runs the risk of catching our civilization. . . once civilized, China can never be uncivilized again . . ."

ØØ

% Entity, unity—functional act of mind (let alone personality). A whole may be functional, as, whole field of view,—or concrete, actual; or abstract and more imaginary, extrapolated, extended, projected, as panorama, universe, a sum of parts or units. You feel yourself a part of your surroundings, sometimes more so, sometimes less (whichever may be a matter of impingement, which of abstraction (a moving forward?) or consolidation of experience in the mind); or you feel yourself one man or remember you've been various people, by imaginative projection or otherwise, however it is. Moving tribes inclined to monotheism, or the opposite? (King of the gods, family of the gods) Divine (a . . . garish ?) forces at first, apparently, then totem animals and/or goddess(es), gradually, then god(s). ‡ Apr 27–My 2

Wonder if any monotheism has ever been anything but anthropomorphic.

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The Editors

Scientific American

Sirs:

With regard to the theoretical possibility of reducing fertilizer use and "high" agricultural yield, that seems even more remote, indeed, than the possibility of lessening municipal and industrial waste (SCIENCE AND THE CITIZEN, March—"Pollution by Fertilizer"), but not quite inconceivable. Barry Commoner's "painful dilemma" between insufficient food production and pollution reminds me of an idea that came to me last Fall, of a Weekly Fast—to include Thanksgiving in the U.S.—as a frequent reminder to ourselves of the likelihood, whatever it is (and crop failures have not been unknown), of inadequate harvests, and of how great food

is, as well as in memory of the starved (in Biafra for instance) and the hungry, in connection with which there could well be a Drive like the March Of Dimes, on the day of the fast, to have money saved from food budgets go towards getting enough or ample supplies to those with a low or below-par living standard, as long as foodstuffs for example are available above ground, and perhaps to recompense grocers and restaurant owners, offer them a subsidy.

Community and participatory democracy in general of course. That day devoted with much heart to public living. If the thing didn't broaden to this it would in some little time be a routine fad instead of an earth- and life-oriented religious element.

One or more fast days a week, if the idea caught on, might allow a deliberate lessening of crops somewhat, though how be frugal one day and bountiful the next? Very concerned versatility would have to become widespread, serious and involved, with swift and accurate, and keen, awareness, on-going, of what activities (and industries!) to diminish, and at any time, which ones to increase. No doubt there would, in any event, be little time for studying war, and a few other things. And some dilemmas would always get overlooked and neglected, still.

Frugal days come to think of it used to alternate, or be relieved by (rather), plentiful ones, which they outnumbered. Fasts and feasts—the two words have the same source—were closely associated.

Hitherto, one dilemma has always made a fine gordian knot with another. At present for instance it seems the tourist trade in some parts is inhibiting the recognition of hunger, indecent housing and so on, as in the past, and more money is being devoted to soil banks than to food-stamp programs. And it might be relatively feasible for the Federal Government to make payments for non-manufacture and/or non-use of chemical fertilizers—to industry, farmers,—and at

the same time cut soil-bank programs thus putting now fallow acres back under the plow.

Larry Eigner
Swampscott, Mass.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Eigner uses a variety of idiosyncratic punctuation marks and abbreviations in his letters, and I have retained as many of these as possible in transcribing the original typescripts. To avoid excessive keystrokes, he often underlines only the first and last letters of book titles. He brackets text that supplements the letters' main text with

marks made by overstriking an opening parenthesis on a closing parenthesis. Text that Eigner deletes by typing an x over each letter has been omitted since it is illegible; words that he crosses out with a pencil have been struck through by hyphens. Eigner occasionally strikes the wrong key on his typewriter, and I have silently corrected obvious mistakes.

1. The first page of the letter ends here, and Eigner inserts "¶ - May 2nd 1963 ¶" at the top of the next page.

2. Dreher's article concerns the "space race" of the 1960s, in which the USSR and the US competed to be the first to land a person on the moon. Dreher supported the attempt to reach the moon but argued against rushing the expedition just to be first.

3. The percentage symbol here and the pound sign that follows are Eigner's idiosyncratic footnote indicators.

Forum

PMLA invites members of the association to submit letters that comment on articles in previous issues or on matters of general scholarly or critical interest. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit Forum contributions and offers the *PMLA* authors discussed in published letters an opportunity to reply. Submissions of more than one thousand words are not considered. The journal omits titles before persons' names and discourages endnotes and works-cited lists in the Forum. Letters should be e-mailed to pmlaforum@mla.org or be printed double-spaced and mailed to *PMLA* Forum, Modern Language Association, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434.

Defoe's History of the Alphabet

TO THE EDITOR:

Scholarship has implications. How, for example, does it negotiate a system that has been accumulating for centuries? In this context, I explore the implications of Paula McDowell's article "Defoe's *Essay upon Literature* and Eighteenth-Century Histories of Mediation" (130.3 [2015]: 566–83), which examines a quirky work by Daniel Defoe. In particular, I look at this work's relation to the alphabet, biblical scholarship, and current political claims.

Defoe's *Essay upon Literature* propounds the fiction that "all" knowledge, literature, and science originated with Moses and that the first letters were the Hebrew imprinted by the finger of a god at Mount Sinai (London, 1726; print [37]). To say that the polytheistic ancients would have considered Venus a whore and Bacchus a drunkard if only they had had alphabetic letters contradicts the obvious fact that they had the same letters used by Defoe and still used today. Equally fallacious is an attempt to discredit oral narratives while peddling the belief that patriarchal accounts were orally preserved over millennia. Defoe appears to concede that the Egyptians developed the hieroglyphic, though he questions its intelligibility one hundred years before its decipherment (10), then says that they copied it from the Israelites but "corrupt[ed]" it and that Babylon, where cuneiform writing was invented, had "no appearance of anything Written" (76, 17).

Such misstatements recur throughout Defoe's work, not just the first "third of the way through," as McDowell maintains (568, 572). Rather than "armchair exploration," as she calls Defoe's history of writing systems, this is dangerous obsession and ignorance (571). McDowell's article fits this work into media and mediation history by arguing that Defoe lauds printing, which makes books cheap and popular

and whose later developments advance knowledge. Can we redeem a work based on fallacies and contradictions by identifying it, somehow, as “an illuminating link” (568), an originator of “a nascent area of intellectual inquiry” (581), “a ladder to liberty” (574), a “learned yet would-be popular text” (569) that “anticipates” later work (569, 572, 573, 580, 581)? Defoe’s *Essay* is more accurately described by opinions that McDowell cites—that his essays are in general “bad” writing, “a kind of nearly demented pedantry”—but apparently dismisses (580).

Printing and media, instead, can promote ignorance in which a system is invested—thus piling up more biased matter and weighing down library shelves by multiplying tomes in a misguided tradition. Though antiquated notions in Defoe’s *Essay* have been debunked, they are still resurrected in different guises today by claim systems dependent on them. They are supported by some scholarship; by Hollywood films about the Flood, Exodus, and other such stories; and by a public that still believes in literal biblical accounts.

It matters little that it’s no longer possible to assume that the Bible is the “oldest” version of the stories it contains. One antecedent after another, uncovered from the sands of time over the past 150 years, shows that biblical accounts derive from mythological precedents and are equally fictional, not unique. The nineteenth-century geology (of Charles Lyell) and biology (of Charles Darwin) and discovery of Gilgamesh fragments discredited the accounts of the Creation and the Flood, events that Defoe dates, and others still date, with certainty. Most scholars (including several Israeli scholars) no longer consider Moses, the “Conquest of Canaan,” the Kingdom of David and Solomon, and other common myths to be historical.

Added to a massive number of publications (editions, translations, dictionaries, invented atlases, etc.) by a well-financed biblical industry, claims like Defoe’s resurface in works printed by modern publishers and are propagated in the mass media, including the Internet. Leonard Shlain’s *The Alphabet versus the*

Goddess (New York: Viking, 1998; print) has Yahweh give the alphabet to his chosen men and dismisses “Phoenicians” as morally and religiously inferior, incapable of inventing the alphabet (68–71)—just as Defoe insists it is “wrongfully” ascribed to the Phoenicians. In newer strategies, since denying that Phoenicians and Aramaeans started alphabetic writing systems is no longer an informed option, their scripts are appropriated as Hebrew or as “paleo-” or “ancient Hebrew”—thus backdated all the same, merged with claim-essential biblical accounts, to make Hebrew look older than it is. For example, many sources maintain that the Jazr (“Gezer”) Calendar, from the eleventh century BCE, was written in “ancient Hebrew” at a time Hebrew did not exist. (Square Hebrew derives from square Imperial Aramaic, which emerged long after the Jazr Calendar was written.) Balanced scholarship recognizes the Jazr Calendar as Phoenician or south Canaanite. The alphabet, one of the greatest inventions in history, is continually subjected to other appropriative agendas. Marshall McLuhan considers it “Graeco-Roman” and, like Defoe, labels writing systems that prepared its way as “unwieldy” (*Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* [New York: McGraw, 1964; print] 4, 87).

Even to acknowledge that Phoenician is “generally held” to be the first alphabet (as McDowell concedes [571]) is a euphemistic misconception, since *Phoenician* is a Greek term for the Canaanites demonized in biblical stories (Defoe thought the Israelites “shou’d have destroy’d” them [25]) and for the Carthaginians vilified by Romans as *Poenicus* (in English, *Punic*, which can mean faithless and treacherous). The alphabet’s origin is now part of standard scholarship. About 2000 BCE, Canaanites in southern Palestine developed twenty-eight signs to represent twenty-eight sounds in their language, using significant shapes (e.g., ox, house, wave, eye, palm), partly inspired by pictorial hieroglyphic; around 1500 BCE, inhabitants of Ugarit, in northwest Syria, used cuneiform technology to write the same sounds; Cadmus (*q-d-m*), the founder of Thebes, took a later form to Greece,

where fewer signs were adapted to Greek sounds; the original twenty-eight sounds are preserved in Arabic letters; Latin script borrowed Etruscan but reversed its writing direction. It is a supreme irony that the tool Canaanites invented is used to belittle and erase them.

While Defoe is useful (when read with appropriate mediation) in a course on the English novel, it's David Hume who attempts to enlighten us about traditions and ideas of God—for which he was almost excommunicated. In "The Natural History of Religion," he concludes that polytheism is "sociable," whereas monotheism harbors "intolerance" (*Four Dissertations* [Bristol: Thoemmes, 1995; print] 60–62). Monotheism and single texts cultivate exclusivity, obsession, and unsalvageable pedantry—the infectious type seen in Defoe and in others who continue to plow fields Hume thought were everlastingly barren. While McDowell is of course not responsible for the chronic nature of biblical literalism or for scholarly circumlocution and the exploitation of religious ignorance in political claims, her article could have better pointed out the need to unlearn intellectually dangerous and regressive knowledge.

Basem L. Ra'ad
Al-Quds University

Reply:

It has been a long time since anyone has called Daniel Defoe's writings "dangerous." A religious dissenter, Defoe was arrested, imprisoned, and pilloried by the English government for publishing *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), a pamphlet that mimics the rhetoric of the High Church Tory Party in order to critique religious intolerance and zeal. Yet Basem Ra'ad singles out Defoe's *Essay upon Literature* (1727) as an example of "intellectu-

ally dangerous and regressive knowledge" and as exhibiting "dangerous obsession."

Disturbed by what he takes to be Defoe's biblical literalism, Ra'ad uses my essay chiefly as an opportunity to advance his own largely unrelated arguments and concerns about "current political claims," twentieth-century texts that my essay does not discuss, and views "propagated in the mass media, including the Internet." He seems scarcely to have read my essay, and certainly not to have taken the time to understand its key terms or central claims, and he repeatedly misrepresents what I say. Instead, he has cobbled together a few quotations from my essay to construct a platform for his own agenda.

While Ra'ad has interesting and useful things to say about the origins of the alphabet—a vast and complex area of study that is not the central subject of my own essay—he has ignored the conjunction in my essay's title, "Defoe's *Essay upon Literature* and Eighteenth-Century Histories of Mediation" (my emphasis). One would never guess from Ra'ad's letter that my article addresses, in addition to Defoe, such wildly diverse authors as Francis Bacon, Edward Stillingfleet, William Temple, William Warburton, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, Adam Smith, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Astle, and Nicolas de Condorcet. One goal of my essay is to suggest what kinds of *new* knowledge might be learned by grouping Defoe's *Essay* and other texts together as members of an emergent genre that I call "histories of mediation." Another is to argue that in the Enlightenment, debates about tradition were the dominant discourse about what we would now call media, mediation, and communication. I encourage PMLA readers who might be interested in such an argument to read my essay and to judge its claims, content, and scholarship for themselves.

Paula McDowell
New York University

Report of the Executive Director

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT ON THE ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES IN 2015. Under the leadership of the Executive Council, the MLA began the major activities associated with Connected Academics, a multiyear project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to provide leadership on careers beyond the college classroom and to help doctoral departments prepare their students for a wide range of careers. The twenty-third study of enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education was released, and the beta version of *Commons Open Repository Exchange* was launched. The MLA launched a new Web site that makes it easier to navigate the rich collection of the association's resources for members and the general public. Following several years of preparatory work, the Executive Council approved a wide-ranging strategic plan that will take the association forward during the next five years; of particular concern are the challenges posed by the association's technological needs and shifts in member demographics. The newly created offices of information systems and of outreach offer structural support for the new directions the council has outlined in the strategic plan. Finally, the MLA headquarters office moved three blocks to 85 Broad Street after a fifteen-year run at 26 Broadway.

Special Projects

Connected Academics: Broadening the Career Horizons of PhDs

As noted above, this project is supported by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and seeks to expand the career horizons customarily presented in language and literature doctoral programs. Broadening employment opportunities for PhDs is one aspect of a larger mission: to evaluate current approaches to gradu-

ate education and the doctoral dissertation and to recommend desirable shifts in academic preparation so that PhDs today receive adequate professional development opportunities for the variety of careers that humanists pursue. David Laurence and I serve as staff liaisons for this project. Stephen Olsen, Nicky Agate, and Stacy Hartman coordinate program activities.

The preparatory phase of the project, which began in late 2012 and continued through the middle of 2015, was conducted by the American Historical Association and the MLA. The two organizations tailored the project to specific disciplinary cultures, employment markets, and intellectual orientations but shared research, ideas, and a general framework and on occasion convened jointly.

The primary phase of Connected Academics launched in 2015. The MLA is working with three institutional partners on projects that will help faculty members and students explore programmatic changes and a broad range of career opportunities. The partners—Arizona State University, Georgetown University, and the University of California Humanities Research Institute—are implementing recommendations of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature that support career diversity for language and literature doctoral students and graduates. We launched a public *MLA Commons* site, <https://connect.commons.mla.org/>, to report on grant activities and make materials available. The site features blog posts, career advice, resources, news, and videos.

Working locally to influence doctoral education, the MLA staff organized the first of three yearlong proseminars for doctoral students, recent graduates, and PhD-holding adjuncts from universities in the New York City area. The proseminar focuses on career horizons for PhDs in modern languages and literatures, in and outside the academy; on long- and short-term prospects for adjunct

positions; and on the versatility and reach of humanities research. Participants, who receive \$2,000 stipends to support their involvement, attend workshops to develop skills and strategies for pursuing connected careers and conduct site visits and informational interviews at units in local academic institutions and in nonprofit organizations, foundations, and other organizations that have a need for the skills acquired in PhD programs. Applications for the 2015–16 proseminar were solicited from New York City–area doctoral programs; from 245 applications we selected twenty doctoral students and recent PhDs from English, foreign language, and comparative literature programs at eleven universities. Participants were interviewed about their graduate program experience, career expectations, and career goals to establish a basis for comparison with the evaluations that will be submitted at the end of the proseminar.

We arranged two sessions for the 2016 MLA convention—A Showcase of PhD Career Diversity and Expanding Career Possibilities for PhDs—to highlight careers of PhD recipients who have put their advanced degrees in the humanities to work in a variety of rewarding occupations. Presenters included university employees in a variety of nonfaculty positions as well as language and literature PhDs employed in government agencies, nonprofit organizations, secondary schools, scholarly associations, think tanks, and technology and digital media companies.

Also at the 2016 MLA convention, we conducted a job-search workshop for graduate students and others interested in pursuing new career options beyond the classroom or the academy. Run by directors of career development at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and at Claremont Graduate University, the workshop focused on practical strategies for conducting such a job search—preparing application materials, networking, and negotiating an offer. Job seekers were also able to meet with experienced department

chairs, career counselors, or PhDs employed outside the academy for twenty-five-minute one-on-one sessions to discuss their job search and career options and to review their application materials.

We began planning for the first Connected Academics institute, to be hosted by the University of California Humanities Research Institute in September 2016, which will bring representatives from the partner institutions together with outside experts to collaborate on concrete strategies for helping doctoral students broaden their career horizons and to develop resources to effect tangible, systemic change in doctoral education.

Strategic Plan

In October 2015, the Executive Council approved a five-year strategic plan to guide the association's development. This plan was the result of an eighteen-month process that included extensive surveys of members and other constituents, follow-up interviews with particular groups, and analysis and discussion by council planning groups and staff members. The plan addresses four major areas of interest to the association—outreach, careers and conventions, advocacy, and publications—and includes sixty-eight broadly defined initiatives describing the association's goals. A publication that will present the strategic plan to the membership is in preparation. Staff members are now implementing the plan by developing projects through which each initiative will be addressed and creating means of assessing the association's progress in each area. A number of initiatives have already seen significant progress, including a new association social media program and an increased presence for professional-development workshops at the annual convention. Staff members will report on the status of the strategic plan at each Executive Council meeting as well as at the annual meeting of the Delegate Assembly.

International Symposium

The idea of organizing a series of MLA conferences outside North America originated with the Executive Council in 2013 and eventually became part of the council's strategic plan for extending the association's international reach. Modeled on the MLA's annual convention, these smaller international meetings, called symposia, are intended to focus on specific themes and will aim to demonstrate the capacity of literary, linguistic, and cultural scholarship to bring insight to the conditions that define and connect societies. In addition to attending plenary events and panel sessions, participants will have the opportunity to engage in the kind of informal conversations across national and disciplinary borders that distinguish the MLA's conventions. In 2014, a connection was established with scholars in Düsseldorf, Germany, who began planning for a symposium by investigating local arrangements. In 2015, the council established an advisory committee whose members assisted the local planners with symposium programming and arrangements; the MLA convention staff also began to help with planning.

The first MLA international symposium is titled *Other Europes: Migrations, Translations, Transformations*. It will take place in Düsseldorf, Germany, in June 2016. The call for papers was issued in late spring 2015; the submission deadline was 15 September. The planners received six hundred proposals—ninety for complete panels and the remainder for individual paper presentations. This means that more than nine hundred people responded to the call for papers. Based on this response and on solicited proposals, the symposium's program committee scheduled sixty-eight sessions. Program highlights include a plenary with Anthony Appiah and Susan Neiman; a roundtable of readings and discussion with the authors Eva Hoffman, Yoko Tawada, and Isaac Julien; and plenaries with the scholars Athena Athanasiou, Mieke Bal, Margaret Ferguson, Deniz Göktürk, Nacira Guénif-

Souilamas, Andreas Huyssen, Kader Konuk, Françoise Lionnet, Siri Nergaard, Ellen Rutten, Susan Suleiman, and Françoise Vergès.

To date, over three hundred people have registered for the symposium. Both the number of registrants and the number of respondents to the call for papers exceeded expectations. We hope that the interest demonstrated in this first symposium will prove to be sustainable and that other international symposia will be part of the MLA's future.

Working Group on K–16 Alliances

From May 2014 until the end of her term as MLA president in January 2015, Margaret W. Ferguson had chaired an Executive Council subcommittee that explored a range of collaborative projects involving teachers at all levels of the education system, from kindergarten through college. In February 2015, the council agreed to continue and expand the work of the subcommittee by establishing the Working Group on K–16 Alliances, which is chaired by Ferguson and has a three-year term. The task of the working group is to define and develop sustainable projects and partnerships that involve teachers in primary, secondary, and higher education and that focus on three main subject areas or issues: the teaching of languages other than English, writing studies, and the possible revision and ongoing implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

One major focus of the working group in its first year was the creation of a public site on *MLA Commons*, which was launched in November 2015. The site allows the working group to share information and promote discussion of its research and writing projects, which focus on the concepts of text complexity and college readiness as they appear in the CCSS for English language arts and in public policy more broadly; cross-level writing instruction that will prepare secondary-school teachers to make college-level writing classes

available to students in eleven rural high schools in Central Oregon; school-college collaborations on the teaching of writing and reading; and K–16 partnerships modeled on Pre-Texts, a program of language instruction in Spanish for elementary school children. The working group sponsored What Is College Reading?, a session at the 2015 convention of the National Council of Teachers of English that dealt with the difficulties students typically encounter making the transition from high school to college, and organized a workshop session for the 2016 MLA convention that explored possibilities for K–16 partnerships modeled on the Pre-Texts program.

The MLA Archive

We made significant progress on the establishment of an MLA archive, a project begun in 2013 at the Executive Council's request. Under the direction of Barbara Chen, an archival consultant from the Brooklyn Historical Society and the Pratt Institute and a graduate student archivist from St. John's University completed the first phases of the project, which involved physically organizing many records, reducing damage to items that had been poorly stored, digitizing print materials and photographs, creating a searchable online database of materials, and planning for the archive's future.

This year the archivist, Liza Young, oversaw the relocation of the archive from several out-of-the-way storage rooms in the old headquarters office to a centrally located archive room in the new office. The archive room houses all materials retained from the years 1883 to 1969 and many artifacts from the 1970s. Young conducted biographical research on the first ten presidents of the MLA, which will appear in a future digital exhibition. Drawing on information from the archive, she also created a digital timeline of the *MLA International Bibliography* (1922–2016) for an exhibit at the 2016 convention that was

supplemented by a physical display of archival materials. This multimedia display served as the first MLA archive-based exhibit of the MLA, raising visibility and awareness of the association's unique resources.

The 2016 convention also served as the launch site of a new project, the MLA Oral History Project, developed in conjunction with the Office of Outreach to recognize longtime members. We invited scholars who have been members for over fifty years to participate in an interview with Young at the convention that would allow us to preserve their memories as important documents of MLA history. We recorded the interviews and photographed the members. Young is continuing her archival work as a full-time staff member and will assist in the preparation of grant proposals seeking support for the further development of the MLA archive.

Membership Trends

In 2015 the association membership decreased by 5.6%. The total number of MLA members at the close of the 2015 membership year was 24,751, of whom 15,752 (63.6%) were regular members, 4,799 (19.4%) were student members, and 4,200 (17.0%) were life and other non-dues-paying members. The 2015 membership enrollment period closed on 30 November.

Finances and Contributions

The audited finances for the 2014–15 fiscal year showed a deficit of \$488,908 in the unrestricted fund. The MLA's total net assets as of 31 August 2015 amounted to \$22,833,509.

The MLA has various restricted funds that support particular activities. Contributions to these funds totaled \$107,971 in the 2015 membership year. This represents a decrease of 2.7% from 2014 giving. The number of individuals who contributed to the funds was 2,317 in 2015 and 2,478 in 2014.

The Endowment Fund saw a decrease in contributions of 11.9%, from \$31,508 in 2014 to \$27,763 in 2015. The number of individuals contributing to the Endowment Fund decreased by 19.1%, from 388 in 2014 to 314 in 2015.

Contributions to the Professional Education Assistance Fund for Graduate Students increased by 5.8% in 2015. Giving totaled \$35,469 in 2014 and \$37,523 in 2015. The number of individuals contributing to this fund decreased by 6.7%. The Professional Education Assistance Fund for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members and Unemployed Members received \$20,573 in contributions in 2015, an increase of 1.1%. The number of individuals contributing to this fund decreased by 0.5%.

The Fund for the Promotion of the Profession received \$7,288 in contributions in 2015, a decrease of 11.7%. The number of contributors to this fund increased by 6.7%. The fund that supports the Phyllis Franklin Award for Public Advocacy of the Humanities received \$7,581 in contributions in 2015, a decrease of 7.8%. The number of contributors to this fund decreased by 11.5%. Contributions to the Good Neighbor Fund totaled \$7,243 in 2015, an increase of 1.5%; the number of contributors to this fund decreased by 3.9%.

Individuals who generously donate \$200 or more to the MLA funds are listed at the MLA Web site on a page about leading contributors. Special recognition is given there for contributions of \$500 or more. Contributions of \$500 or more totaled \$28,785 in 2015, a 4.0% decrease from 2014. Contributions of \$200 to \$499 totaled \$23,495, a 4.1% increase over 2014. Leading-contributor contributions totaled \$52,280 in 2015, 0.5% less than in 2014.

MLA Awards

Each year at the convention, the association recognizes exceptional achievements in scholarship. In January 2016 the association awarded fifteen prizes, including the William Riley Parker Prize for an outstanding essay

in *PMLA*. The award selection committees for the 2015 award year considered 580 books. Of these titles, 208 (35.9%) competed for either the James Russell Lowell Prize or the MLA Prize for a First Book, and 71 (12.2%) competed for the Lois Roth Award for a translation of a literary work. The books that competed for the remainder of the awards numbered 301 (51.9%).

Grants to defray the cost of traveling to the convention are available each year to graduate student members. In 2015 there were 278 applications for these grants. All the applicants but one were eligible, and only 236 attended the convention. All the applicants who attended the convention received a grant. The number of eligible applicants in 2015 was 10.6% lower than in 2014.

The association also offers grants to defray the cost of traveling to the convention to MLA members who are contingent non-tenure-track faculty members or are unemployed. In 2015 there were 55 applications for these grants. All the applicants were eligible, but 18 canceled their plans to attend the convention. The total number of these grants awarded in 2015 was therefore 37 (down from 68 in 2014), of which 31 went to contingent non-tenure-track faculty members, at 30 institutions. The grant program is designed to encourage institutions to support the professional development of their faculty members by providing matching funds; 14 of the 30 institutions (46.7%) provided such funds. In 2014 matching funds were provided by 57.4% of institutions.

In 2015 the association again offered grants to defray the cost of traveling to the convention to MLA members who reside outside the United States and Canada. There were 18 applications for these grants; all the applicants were eligible and were notified that they would receive a grant. Four canceled their plans to attend the convention. The total number of these grants awarded in 2015 was therefore 14 (1 less than in 2014).

MLA International Bibliography

Barbara Chen, director of Bibliographic Information Services and editor of the *MLA International Bibliography*, reports that the bibliography database contained 2,698,525 records as of the December 2015 retrospective update. In 2015, we indexed 76,134 publications, an increase of 8% over 2014. Changes in production led to a significant decrease in processing time and therefore quicker access to material for subscribers. In July, we modified workflow to allow us to send revisions to retrospective records to our vendors with each update instead of semiannually. This change means faster availability of corrections and of added full-text links and abstracts. The *Directory of Periodicals*, which is accessible to members through the MLA Web site, included 5,041 active titles, 570 of which were e-journals, and historical information on nearly 2,000 additional periodicals. Both files are distributed as a package by three vendors—EBSCO, ProQuest, and Cengage (Gale). Discovery services provide subscribers to the bibliography with another route of access. Four discovery platforms—OCLC WorldCat Local, EBSCO Discovery Service, Serial Solutions Summon, and ExLibris Primo Central—now include the bibliography.

Over 73,000 publisher-provided abstracts are available to subscribers. The number of bibliography records containing full-text links continues to grow. There are now links to more than 64,000 *Project MUSE* articles, more than 75,000 dissertations deposited in ProQuest's *Dissertations and Theses* database, and more than 160,000 *JSTOR* articles. License agreements continue to allow for further expansion of the number of full-text links and abstracts in the database. Libraries that have the necessary subscriptions are able to give their users seamless access to full text. *Choice* reviews of books are also included as they become available, and the vendors of the bibliography add full-text links to the publications

available through their other products. The bibliography includes over 368,000 DOIs (digital object identifiers) and links to more than 2,000 indexed scholarly Web sites.

MLA Biblink was introduced in June 2015 as a result of our partnership with ORCID, a nonprofit organization that provides unique digital identifiers to researchers, who can then distinguish themselves from others with similar names. Scholars can easily search the *MLA International Bibliography* for their works, including those published under variant names, and add them to their ORCID profiles. A tutorial, *Building Your Scholarly Identity with the MLA International Bibliography and ORCID*, was created to guide scholars on the process.

Since July 2013, when the first two online tutorials on searching the *MLA Bibliography* were introduced through the MLA Web site, the bibliography's *Facebook* page, and *MLA Commons*, the number of tutorials has grown. Twenty are now available to users on topics ranging from the scope of the bibliography to researching rhetoric and composition in it. Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, and Italian translations of *What Is the MLA International Bibliography?* have been released. We plan to create more tutorials in 2016.

The MLA staff members who index publications received assistance in 2015 from seventy-six scholar-bibliographers in the field (twenty-one distinguished bibliographers, nine senior bibliographers, forty-four bibliographers, and two assistant bibliographers). The *MLA Bibliography* fellowship program, which was introduced in 2004 with the approval of the Executive Council, allowed the appointment of ten more fellows in 2015. Five fellows from the group appointed in 2012 successfully completed their terms and were awarded certificates during the 2016 MLA convention.

Bibliography staff members serve the wider profession through the National Federation of Advanced Information Services (NFAIS) and the Professional/Scholarly Publishing Division (PSP) of the Association of American Pub-

lishers. In 2015 staff members served on three committees—an NFAIS humanities task force, an NFAIS standards committee, and the PSP's Committee for Digital Innovation—and participated in the selection process for the PSP's PROSE Awards. Staff members also attended the annual and midwinter meetings of the American Library Association to take part in sessions on the bibliography and to meet with librarians and vendors.

Office of Scholarly Communication

The Office of Scholarly Communication, reorganized after Judy Goulding's retirement as director of MLA publishing operations, is responsible for the development of the association's major print and electronic publications, including *PMLA*, book publications, material for *MLA Commons*, and other scholarly communication initiatives. In addition, the editing of all association publications and communications is housed within the office. The office is directed by Kathleen Fitzpatrick, who serves as managing editor of MLA publications and as associate executive director.

PMLA

The 130th volume of *PMLA* includes twenty-seven regular essays. The special features Criticism in Translation and Little-Known Documents are represented in the volume and continue to draw many submissions from members. Shorter, commissioned essays appear in nearly every issue under the rubrics Theories and Methodologies, The Changing Profession, and Correspondents at Large. The Forum section in the volume comprises four letters to the editor and two replies from authors.

After an Editor's Column about languages that are extinct or threatened with extinction, the January 2015 issue offers five regular essays, several of them on literary modernism. Continuing that theme, the series Little-Known Documents presents rediscov-

ered texts by Djuna Barnes (who is the subject of one of the regular essays) and Laura (Riding) Jackson. Two short essays on Mikhail Bakhtin by M. L. Gasparov, translated for the first time, appear under Criticism in Translation. Finally, as part of Theories and Methodologies, five authors remember the work of the legendary book editor Helen Tartar, whose career was cut short by a car accident.

The March 2015 issue opens with an Editor's Column that collects memorial remarks delivered at the 2015 MLA convention about Patsy Yaeger, *PMLA*'s immediate past editor. Six regular essays follow, and then two sets of scholars examine the topics "Reframing Postcolonial and Global Studies in the Longer *Durée*" (Theories and Methodologies) and "The Semi-public Intellectual: Academia, Criticism, and the Internet Age" (The Changing Profession). The issue concludes with another entry in the series Little-Known Documents: a speech by Eileen Chang about translation from Chinese.

In lieu of an Editor's Column, the May issue begins with a Guest Column by Evelyn Ender and Deidre Shauna Lynch on the pedagogy of reading. It serves in part to introduce a related cluster of essays later in the issue. After Margaret Ferguson's 2015 MLA Presidential Address, the issue offers six wide-ranging regular essays. Theories and Methodologies comprises six commentaries on Andrew Cole's recent book *The Birth of Theory*, to which Cole responds, and then thirteen on the topic "Learning to Read," especially in connection with the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

The October issue features the special topic Emotions, coordinated by Katharine Ann Jensen and Miriam L. Wallace, who provide an introduction. Ten regular essays explore affect in an array of cultural contexts worldwide, as do five essays under Theories and Methodologies and three under The Changing Profession. Four contributors to Correspondents at Large give more-immediate perspectives on the emotions.

PMLA received 330 submissions in 2015. Since October 2004, the journal's historical archive has been maintained online at *JSTOR*, where the volumes covering 1884–2010 are available. There is a five-year "moving wall" between the latest volume in *JSTOR* and the currently published volume: the 2010 volume was added at the end of 2015. Electronic versions of current issues are available to subscribing libraries in PDF through the MLA's Web site for its journal content (mlajournals.org). Content management and day-to-day administration of the site are handled in the Office of Information Systems.

Book Publications

The association's book publications program continues to publish a diverse set of peer-reviewed books. To support teaching and scholarship in the modern languages and literatures, the MLA publishes reference works, collections of scholarly articles, guides to teaching, materials suitable for instruction in foreign languages and English composition, and classroom editions of familiar and lesser-known texts from around the world in their original language and in English translation. The association maintains a backlist of nearly three hundred titles, and book sales remain an important source of revenue. The MLA published eight new titles in its established book series in 2015. New books in the Approaches to Teaching series address the work of Miguel de Cervantes, J. R. R. Tolkien, Jack London, and Henry Fielding. In the Options for Teaching series, new volumes focus on the Latin American Boom and on human rights in literary and cultural studies. One non-series book, on service learning and literary studies in English, was published this year. The book program has begun active outreach to expand its list in rhetoric and composition and continues to pursue books on works originally published in non-European languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Classical Persian,

and Japanese. The staff is pursuing projects in Korean for the Texts and Translations series with the help of the editorial board appointed by the Publications Committee for a four-year term (2014–17). The book publications program continues to experiment with using *MLA Commons* as a venue for the open development of new titles while producing rigorously reviewed publications in print and digital formats.

The year's new titles are as follows:

Brandt, Kenneth K., and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, eds. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Jack London*

Brayman Hackel, Heidi, and Ian Frederick Moulton, eds. *Teaching Early Modern English Literature from the Archives*

Donovan, Leslie, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and Other Works*

Grobman, Laurie, and Roberta Rosenberg, eds. *Service Learning and Literary Studies in English*

Kerr, Lucille, and Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola, eds. *Teaching the Latin American Boom*

Moore, Alexandra Schultheis, and Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg, eds. *Teaching Human Rights in Literary and Cultural Studies*

Parr, James A., and Lisa Vollendorf, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Cervantes's Don Quixote*. 2nd ed.

Wilson, Jennifer Preston, and Elizabeth Kraft, eds. *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Henry Fielding*

Staff members in the Office of Scholarly Communication continued their work developing and editing the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook*, slated for publication in spring 2016, and creating online resources to support the use of MLA style.

MLA Commons

MLA Commons has been flourishing since its launch at the 2013 convention in Boston. In the past year, *Commons* membership has

increased by 17%, to almost a quarter of the total MLA membership. If we compare September 2015 with September 2014, we have seen a 21% increase in the total number of visitors, a 35% increase in the total number of visits, a 55% increase in the total number of page views, and a 49% increase in the average length of time a user spends on the *Commons*. *Commons* members are joining groups, participating in discussions, depositing and sharing their work, developing book projects, creating companion sites to accompany print publications, and generally helping shape the association's future. MLA staff members are working on a more intuitive interface that immediately connects users with the information they need and are continuing to identify ways to improve and enhance the user experience.

We are also making active use of the *Commons* as a publishing platform. In addition to hosting News from the MLA, the *Commons* features blogs that include regular updates from the Executive Council, the president, the executive director, the Office of Research, and the *MLA International Bibliography*. All committees are being actively encouraged to highlight their work and to use the specially designed sites available to them to provide resources and, where relevant, mentorship to their constituencies. *Profession* is now published on a rolling basis on the *Commons*. In addition, several prospective MLA books—including volumes on modernist women's writing, anglophone South Asian women writers, and teaching space, place, and literature—are or will be using the *Commons* to foster their development. A new community magazine, the *Wire*, features how members are using the platform to promote convention sessions and publications, host reading groups, and showcase the public value of their work. In the coming months, the *Commons* will also host a site devoted to resources on MLA style and a companion site for PMLA.

As noted above, the book publications program uses *MLA Commons* as a platform for publishing books. We are working on further iterations of the publicly available *Literary Studies in the Digital Age*, edited by Kenneth M. Price and Ray Siemens, as well as the open-access *Digital Pedagogies in the Humanities: A Reader and Toolkit*, edited by Matthew Gold, Rebecca Davis, Jentery Sayers, and Katherine Harris.

In early May 2015, the MLA released the beta version of *Commons Open Repository Exchange (CORE)*, a new social repository for members. *CORE* combines a library-quality repository for sharing, discovering, retrieving, and archiving scholarly work with the social networking capabilities of *MLA Commons*. Deposits so far number fifty-five articles, eighteen book chapters, seven essays, six conference papers, four dissertations, four presentations, four syllabi and a learning object, three books, three theses, two bibliographies, two white papers, and one set of conference proceedings. Every item has been shared with at least one MLA forum, and most have been shared with more than one group. Some items deposited during Open Access Week and in the initial days of the prototype's release have been viewed over three hundred times and downloaded by more than seventy people. Development of *CORE* continues; we will seek additional grant aid to take it to the next stage.

The office announced a new project, *Humanities Commons*, funded by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This collaboration between the MLA and three other scholarly societies—the College Art Association, the Association for Jewish Studies, and the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies—is the pilot for a federated network of sites hosted by the MLA and designed to foster interdisciplinary communication.

Editorial Activities

The Office of Scholarly Communication edits the full range of association publications

and communications, including membership and promotional materials, print books and e-books, *PMLA*, the *Literary Research Guide*, the *ADE Bulletin*, the *ADFL Bulletin*, *Profession*, the *Job Information List* and related reports, the *MLA Newsletter*, material for the MLA Web site and *MLA Commons*, and reports from the Office of Research and the Office of Programs—most notably, this year, the twenty-third study of enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education.

Other Activities

Staff members in the Office of Scholarly Communication gave presentations at or otherwise participated in a number of meetings during the year, including the American Historical Association annual convention, held in New York; the National Humanities Alliance annual meeting, held in Washington; the Conference on College Composition and Communication, held in Tampa; the Association for Asian Studies conference, held in Chicago; the American Comparative Literature Association conference, held in Seattle; a conference on the public humanities held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; a conference on open knowledge held at the University of Duisberg-Essen; Advancing Research Communication and Scholarship, held in Philadelphia; the Book Industry Study Group's Higher Education conference, held in New York; a symposium on new ecologies of scholarship held at Northeastern University; a conference on the future of the humanities held in Montreal; the Latin American Studies Association conference, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico; the Digital Humanities Summer Institute and the Implementing New Knowledge Environments meeting, held in Victoria, British Columbia; a conference on open access held at Coventry University; the Association of American University Presses annual meeting, held in

Denver; a workshop on digital scholarship in liberal arts colleges held at Hamilton College; an NEH summer institute on digital archaeology held at Michigan State University; a meeting on reinventing the humanities PhD held in Washington; the ITHAKA Next Wave meeting, held in New York; the Midwest Modern Language Association annual meeting, held in Columbus; and the Coalition for Networked Information fall meeting, held in Washington.

Office of Research

David Laurence oversees the Office of Research, which supports the association's data-collection projects and administers the *Job Information List (JIL)*, including the annual tabulation and analysis of the number of ads departments posted to the list and the number of jobs that the ads announced.

The office maintains a blog on *MLA Commons* called *The Trend*, which provides a venue for disseminating brief reports on the findings of research undertaken for MLA committees and projects. It also allows the office to bring information on relevant topics—the academic workforce, undergraduate and graduate study, PhD placement—to the attention of MLA members and others in the field. Two posts appeared in 2015: the February report on the current employment status of recent doctorate recipients, mentioned below, and a November analysis of reports from the Humanities Indicators project on the effect of gender on the occupations and earnings of humanities majors.

In 2014–15 the office was represented at the annual meetings of the National Council of Teachers of English, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the American Historical Association. For this last meeting the office organized a panel on student writing and issues surrounding creating assignments and reading and commenting on the papers students submit.

Data-Collection Projects

The Office of Research annually develops information from the United States government's Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) about trends in the number of doctoral degree recipients in English and other modern languages and trends in time to degree and graduates' postgraduation plans across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. The office also tracks information from the degree completions and human resources components of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to analyze trends in bachelor's degrees and the distribution and changing balance of full- and part-time, tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty appointments in United States postsecondary institutions. The most recent IPEDS completions data cover the academic year 2013–14; the most recent data on human resources and staffing are for fall 2014.

The MLA also conducts its own survey research, notably the periodic surveys of doctoral student placement (the most recent in the series covered graduates who received degrees in 2009–10), of foreign language enrollments, and of departmental staffing. In February, the report on fall 2013 language enrollments was published on the MLA Web site. The survey achieved better than a 98% response rate and can be regarded as a census of fall 2013 enrollments in language courses in United States institutions of postsecondary education. The fall 2013 enrollment data were added to the online historical database containing data from the twenty-two surveys conducted between 1958 and 2009. Between 1 January and 31 December 2015, more than 4,500 visitors performed over 9,400 searches on the MLA's Language Enrollment Database.

In spring 2015 the office fielded a staffing survey to 4,714 departments in 2,912 separate institutions; 737 departments in 583 institutions responded. In addition to asking for department-level head counts of faculty members in different tenure and employment statuses, the staffing survey tracks where in

the curriculum these categories of faculty members teach and seeks information about the average annual salary of full-time non-tenure-track faculty members and the average per-course salary for part-time faculty members paid by the course.

This past year the office also canvassed departments about their hiring plans and processes, how videoconferencing and teleconferencing technologies are changing their use of the MLA convention for screening interviews, and how they see the role of the convention in the job search. Results were brought to the ADE and ADFL summer seminars for discussion.

With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the office collaborated on developing 2015 MLA convention and 2015 ADE and ADFL summer seminar programming aimed at broadening the career horizons of doctoral students and encouraging doctoral programs to give increased attention to career planning and placement for current students and recent graduates (see the section on special projects, above). As part of this project, the office developed findings from its research on the current employment of 2,500 graduates of modern language doctoral programs who received degrees between 1996 and 2011. The 2,500 were randomly selected from *Dissertations Abstracts* records in the *MLA International Bibliography*. In February a report on this research was posted on *The Trend* under the title “Where Are They Now? Occupations of 1996–2011 PhDs in 2013.” In collaboration with the American Historical Association, we plan to survey PhDs in our fields to learn more about their career paths and progress since leaving graduate school, with a special focus on the subset of graduates who have established careers outside postsecondary teaching.

Job Information List and Interfolio Services

The report on jobs in the 2014–15 *JIL* was posted on the MLA Web site in December 2015. After modest increases in 2010–11 and

2011–12, the number of jobs advertised declined for the third year in a row. The *JIL*’s English edition announced 1,015 jobs, 31 (3.0%) fewer than in 2013–14; the foreign language edition announced 949 jobs, 78 (7.6%) fewer than in 2013–14. The 2014–15 totals are 811 (44.4%) below and 731 (43.5%) below the 2007–08 prerecession peaks of 1,826 jobs for the English edition and 1,680 jobs for the foreign language edition, respectively.

In September 2013, access to search the *JIL* database became free of charge to all users. A new, unified search interface, also introduced in 2013, allows job seekers to retrieve listings from both editions of the *JIL* (previously, the English edition and the foreign language edition had separate search interfaces). MLA members use their member log-in credentials to reach the search interface; nonmembers create free accounts.

This past year marked the third in which both MLA members and nonmembers could sign up for free Interfolio Dossier accounts when they applied to positions from ads placed in the *JIL*. The MLA’s agreement with Interfolio also provides departments that place ads the option to adopt Interfolio’s ByCommittee platform to manage their job searches. Within the *JIL*–Interfolio Dossier and ByCommittee system, all candidate materials—letters of application, dossiers and letters of recommendation, and writing samples—move freely from candidates’ dossier accounts to departments’ ByCommittee accounts, which makes applying for positions from ads in the *JIL* cost-free for candidates. Complicating this arrangement is the widespread adoption by institutions of applicant tracking systems (ATS) like PeopleAdmin and PeopleSoft, which require candidates to transmit application materials to a Web portal administered by an institutional office of human resources. Essentially, an ATS-based application system requires candidates to build a new dossier at every institution where they apply instead of transmitting a dossier

from a central service like Interfolio. This past year 57.8% of the ads placed in the *JIL* required candidates to apply through an institutional ATS. ByCommittee was called for in 21.8% of ads. The remaining ads asked candidates to transmit applications to a departmental e-mail address (15.7%) or to send them by surface mail (4.7%).

Office of Programs

The Office of Programs, directed by Dennis Looney, oversees activities in the fields of English and foreign languages and the projects of the ADE and the ADFL.

The office curates the MLA Language Map and the MLA Language Map Data Center, which continue to serve many visitors online. Between 1 January and 31 December 2015, tracking software recorded 15,079 unique active visitors to the map who made 64,677 requests for maps. The most frequently sought maps displayed the distribution of speakers of Spanish (7,455), English (5,850), French (3,977), German (3,792), Chinese (3,767), all languages other than English combined (3,430), Italian (2,560), and Arabic (2,555). The Language Map also displays the locations of and enrollments in college and university programs in the languages the user is researching by using data from the fall 2013 enrollment survey, which were added to the map after the publication of the 2013 survey report.

The office makes available at no cost two brochures that can be downloaded from the MLA Web site: *Why Learn Another Language? Knowing Other Languages Brings Opportunities*, designed primarily for secondary schools, and *Foreign Language Study in the Age of Globalization: The College-Level Experience*.

Staff members represented the MLA at meetings of the Northeast MLA, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the Foreign Language Standards Collaborative Board, the Joint National Committee for Languages, the American Associa-

tion of Italian Studies, the College Language Association, and the National Association for Self-Instructional Language Programs.

ADFL-MLA Language Consultancy Service

Begun in 2010 as a project overseen by a working group of the Executive Council, the ADFL-MLA Language Consultancy Service provides assistance to language departments that seek to implement recommendations from the 2007 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. Workshops held at the 2012 and 2013 conventions allowed the working group to identify the necessary components of a successful consultancy service. The project took another step in 2012, when the council established the joint MLA-ADFL Steering Committee on New Structures for Languages in Higher Education and charged it with developing a formal plan for a consultancy service to be administered by the ADFL Executive Committee. The ADFL-MLA Language Consultancy Service has been in place since 1 July 2014.

During the 2015 calendar year, faculty experts, identified and trained by members of the ADFL staff, served as consultants at eleven institutions across the country, two colleges and nine universities. Of the nine universities, one was a public flagship institution, two were private Research 1 institutions, one was a small faith-based institution, three were regional comprehensive universities, and two were small regional universities. The departments visited were of various types, including international languages and cultures, modern languages, modern and classical languages, modern languages and linguistics, and world language studies; we also visited a center for second-language studies. The consultancy is developing a series of online resources to showcase good work that departments are doing and is commissioning articles for the *ADFL Bulletin* on examples of best practices. We continue to provide informa-

tional materials that departments may find useful for revising their practices and plan to invite more departments to consider how the service might help them to strengthen their programs. We project approximately one consultancy per month in 2016.

ADE and ADFL

In the fiscal year ending August 2015, the ADE, directed by David Laurence, had 663 member departments (compared with 684 in 2013–14 and 719 in 2012–13); the ADFL, directed by Dennis Looney, had 813 member departments (compared with 853 in 2013–14 and 868 in 2012–13). The ADE and the ADFL now have a common dues structure and schedule, in which dues are based on the size of departments' faculties. Since it allows multiple departments to renew their ADE and ADFL memberships together, the common dues structure encourages departmental collaboration and institution-wide participation in the ADE and the ADFL while preserving the individual department as the unit of membership in each organization.

The ADE and the ADFL sponsor sessions at the MLA Annual Convention to aid job candidates and hiring committees. The convention is also the setting for the presentation of the organizations' major awards. At the convention in January 2016, in Austin, John David Guillory received the ADE Francis Andrew March Award, and Malcolm Alan Compitello received the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession.

The ADE and ADFL summer seminars provide opportunities for department chairs, directors of graduate studies, and others with departmental administrative responsibilities to exchange information, form networks for professional support, gain wider perspective on issues confronting their departments' graduate and undergraduate programs, and participate in professional development workshops for departmental administrators.

In 2015, the ADE and the ADFL held a joint summer seminar in Arlington, Virginia. It was hosted by George Mason University and the University of Maryland and attracted 136 participants. ADE Seminar South, co-hosted in Kansas City, Missouri, by the English departments at Kansas State University and the University of Missouri, attracted 87 participants. ADFL Seminar West was hosted jointly by San José State University and Santa Clara University and attracted 55 participants. Each of the three meetings featured a preseminar workshop for new chairs. The seminar in Arlington also featured a workshop for department reviewers that focused on strategic planning. Preseminar workshops for directors of graduate and undergraduate studies in English were held at the ADE seminar in Kansas City. A preseminar workshop on teaching language through literature was offered at the ADFL seminar in San José.

Several sessions at the 2015 joint ADE-ADFL seminar in Arlington provided opportunities for the department chairs, directors of graduate studies, and other departmental representatives who attended to discuss pressing curricular issues that affect undergraduate enrollments. Over seventy faculty members were in attendance for a discussion breakout session on recruiting majors in English and languages other than English. Plenary sessions addressed trends in undergraduate education, issues of advocacy and policy in the humanities and international education, accommodations for students and faculty members with disabilities, and undergraduate literary study today. A plenary roundtable explored what external reviewers learn about undergraduate programs in English and other modern languages and literatures.

Sessions at the ADFL seminar in San José addressed the reconfiguration of language departments in the national context; the department chair as manager; effective ways of redesigning the undergraduate curriculum, including options in the digital humanities;

and best practices for collaborative work. A plenary session organized and run by MLA staff members examined trends in enrollments in languages other than English and explored effective uses of national, institutional, and departmental data in advocating for the language department. A plenary roundtable featuring three deans discussed effective ways for chairs to measure and for faculty members to take part in service. Languages for the professions and heritage language learning were the topics that experts in the field presented and debated at two keynote sessions.

Sessions at the ADE seminar in Kansas City addressed the structure of English bachelor's degree programs; recruiting students to the English major; learning from external reviews; preparing graduates at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree levels for professional careers; negotiating issues of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation in the work of chairing; understanding disability and reasonable accommodation as legal and regulatory concepts in working with faculty members who have disabilities; learning the budget and how to work with it; and processes and protocols for job searches. A plenary panel featured three upper-level administrators who shared perspectives on the situation of the humanities in the university today.

In 2015 discussion on the ADE and ADfL chairs' lists addressed a wide range of issues. On the ADE side these included assessment plans and departments' current practices; reviewing language on scholarship for the purposes of promotion, tenure, and workload for equity; grants from external sources; comprehensive exam processes; research and publication differences by discipline and prevailing metrics; strategies for recruiting majors in language and literature fields; subventions for faculty books; Campus Equity Week and how to participate; practices for renewing lecturers; base salaries and course-load assignments for graduate student teaching assistants; ex-

perience launching a bachelor of fine arts in creative writing and sustaining it; measuring effective teaching and preparing faculty members to teach; institutions that have remade themselves in the light of diminished budgets; crediting time in rank at another institution; workshopping assistant professors' book manuscripts; learning about academic budgeting and finances; caps in core requirement courses; hiring doctorate recipients as visiting assistant professors; and miscellaneous announcements from the ADE office.

The following topics were chief among those raised on the ADfL chairs' electronic discussion list: foreign language requirements (for entry, within specific colleges or departments, and when under attack), teaching assistant salaries, the definition of a foreign language and the categorization of American Sign Language, what counts as research and the single-authored book as the main standard of scholarship, study abroad as a requirement and as a recruitment tool, goals for first-year Japanese, language certificates, twice-weekly two-hour blocks for face-to-face language instruction, third-year composition and conversation classes, learning disability accommodations and language instruction, offering credit based on the Oral Proficiency Interview, gender-neutral language in the foreign language classroom, Mango Languages program, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, virtual language lab, the bachelor of arts in modern languages, intercultural competence major, recruiting majors, and minimum standard credit hours for full-time tenure-track faculty members.

ADE Bulletin and ADfL Bulletin

The ADE and ADfL bulletins have been e-journals since 2010. Faculty members and students in member departments have access to the full text of articles in current and back issues. Tables of contents and bibliographic information for all issues are openly avail-

able. Library subscriptions to the bulletins are available; libraries receive the *Job Information List* and the ADE and ADFL bulletins at specified IP address ranges. In 2015 the *ADFL Bulletin* published a cluster of short articles on the special topic of the monolingual international as well as articles on strategic planning in academic departments, large-enrollment beginning foreign language classes, early modern visual culture in the liberal arts language classroom, tutoring modern languages and cultures through service learning, and reforming graduate education. The *ADE Bulletin* published a cluster of articles on issues connected with the Common Core State Standards along with articles on the major in English and how to strengthen it, the job search, how to maintain a research profile while chairing, and evaluating writing assignments.

Office of Outreach

The Office of Outreach was created in 2015 to focus on increasing the MLA's reach and impact. Siovahn Walker, the director of the new office, works in cooperation with other MLA offices and independently to promote and coordinate a unified communications and outreach strategy designed to increase membership, convention attendance, sales, and donations. The office is composed of three units: convention programs, promotion and sales, and communications.

MLA Convention

Karin L. Bagnall, head of convention programs, plans for and organizes the MLA's annual convention and other association conferences. She reports that the 2016 convention in Austin drew 5,894 attendees, of whom 1,325 (22.5%) were graduate students. Convention attendees could register, request their hotel rooms, and make travel arrangements for the convention through the MLA Web site. There were 846 convention sessions,

with approximately 4,107 speakers from over 895 universities and colleges. The convention program broke down as follows: 309 special sessions, linked sessions, and plenaries organized by members (including the presidential plenary and its linked session); 300 forum sessions, 59 MLA committee sessions, and 149 allied organization sessions (91 of these 508 sessions were nonguaranteed sessions that the Program Committee approved); and 29 special events (including creative conversations) and social events. The exhibit hall had 102 booths, representing 97 companies and institutions, including the MLA.

The 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 annual conventions will be held in Philadelphia, New York City, Chicago, and Seattle, respectively.

Development

As part of the MLA's five-year strategic plan, the Office of Outreach has begun working on expanding the association's fund-raising and development capacity. Specific projects include the creation of Web pages dedicated to donor recognition and the association's impact; the initiation of donor-prospect research, designed to identify and cultivate relationships with those members with higher giving potential; and strengthening association messaging and members' engagement with association activities to improve annual appeal numbers. Staff members are also working on a series of fund-raising initiatives as part of a yearlong development campaign tied to my final year as executive director. The campaign will focus on raising funds for graduate students and members of the precariat.

Profession

Profession, the association's online journal about the fields of modern languages and literatures as a profession publishes articles on a rolling basis on *MLA Commons*. An e-book of the 2015 articles will be made available for downloading at no charge. The executive

director serves as editor; Anna Chang is managing editor.

The 2015 volume opened with “Ethical Conundrums: Institutional Pressure and Graduate Student Needs in the Era of Contingency,” an essay by David B. Downing about how graduate schools should respond to pressures to downsize, and the remarks of Rolena Adorno, winner of the MLA Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement, who spoke at the 2015 convention about Spanish in the world. Six essays in the volume offer perspectives on the closing and merging of humanities programs. Introduced by Clorinda Donato and Susan C. Anderson, the cluster includes four case studies: Brett Bowles offers his perspective on the elimination of the French PhD program at the University at Albany, State University of New York; Mary Wildner-Bassett describes the merger of seven previously independent departments and programs into the School of International Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the University of Arizona; Philip E. Lewis writes from his perspective as then vice president of the Mellon Foundation about decisions to allocate resources for departments and fore-shadows a slow shrinkage of language programs by “attrition and reorganization”; and Sandi E. Cooper, of the College of Staten Island, City University of New York, discusses the consequences for language programs of the restructuring known as Pathways. The final essay of the cluster, by Christopher Newfield, challenges what he identifies as faulty calculations of the economic value of humanities departments and urges faculty bodies to make their contributions visible with data. The volume also features four essays from the 2015 Presidential Forum on negotiating sites of memory. Margaret W. Ferguson, the 2014–15 president of the MLA, introduces essays by Peter Kulchyski, who writes about Canada’s Peterborough Petroglyphs, or Teaching Rocks, and how colonial development has blunted their impact while

ostensibly protecting them; Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, who interprets the story of Isaac in writing about Israel/Palestine; and Wai Chee Dimock, who discusses using literary texts about incarceration to build bridges between college and university educators and students in the American prison system.

In 2015 *Profession* received fifteen submissions. It usually attracts about two dozen submissions each year on a wide variety of subjects. The *Profession* Editorial Collective reviews submissions and a staff editorial collective assists the editor in evaluating reviews and selecting articles for publication.

Promotion and Sales

Our continuing efforts to promote the *MLA International Bibliography* included our having a more visible presence at librarians’ conferences. We exhibited at the Charleston Conference for reference librarians in November 2015, and we are planning to exhibit at the American Library Association convention in July 2016. We advertise the bibliography in publications and on Web sites targeted to librarians (including *Choice*, *Against the Grain*, and *Library Journal*). We regularly promote the tutorial videos we have produced in advertising and on the bibliography’s *YouTube*, *Facebook*, and *Twitter* pages.

To promote our book publications, we mailed two catalogs in 2015: a members’ catalog and a catalog for bookstores and libraries. The members’ catalog is sent to thirty thousand addresses, and the bookstore catalog is sent to approximately fifteen thousand recipients. We advertise MLA books in over one hundred publications and Web sites annually. Additional efforts to stimulate book sales in 2015 included a special sale on Approaches to Teaching World Literature titles and e-mail campaigns to specific MLA forums. We work with authors on promotions of their titles and contract with Scholar’s Choice to exhibit MLA titles at targeted scholarly meetings

throughout the year. We also send review copies of each title to scholarly journals and other publications.

Office of Information Systems

The Office of Information Systems, established at the end of 2014, is headed by Micki Kaufman and is responsible for establishing the MLA's technology strategy and vision and ensuring the successful and efficient technical operation of all association networks and systems. Following a restructuring in December 2015, the office is made up of five units: data design, systems and networks, software development, print production, and online production. This year the office has focused on managing the technical aspects of the headquarters move to a new office facility and hosting provider; the upgrading and integration of telephone, videoconferencing, and server systems; the production of the new MLA Web site; the evaluation of customer relationship management and other software and of several new technology platforms for the bibliography; and new or continuing development of the *Commons Open Repository Exchange*, *MLA Commons*, and the *MLA International Bibliography*.

The Move to 85 Broad Street

The MLA's move to 85 Broad Street involved extensive preparation. The physical move of printers, monitors, and PCs (including all MLA servers, Web sites, and workstations) was completed during the weekend of 11–12 July, and all systems were up and running for the start of business the following Monday. We also installed new routers, switches, wireless networks, and videoconferencing and other technology infrastructure. Simultaneously, our server farm was moved to CoreSite, an off-site data-center service provider located in Secaucus, NJ. This move allows the MLA to take advantage of superior data-

center infrastructure (environment control, fire-suppression systems, redundant power source, around-the-clock physical security) while maintaining control over our servers. It has the added benefit of reducing the space, power, and cooling needs for the server room at the new office location, which is connected to CoreSite through a dedicated, point-to-point fiber-optic line. We also configured virtual private networks at 85 Broad Street and CoreSite that allow MLA staff members to connect to our network from anywhere.

A New MLA Online Presence

The development and design of and migration to a new platform for the MLA's main Web site have been a major focus of the office in 2015. The redesigned MLA Web site was launched in late October, as were the new sites for the ADE and the ADFL. Most old content has been migrated onto the new platform, although selected functionality remains on a redesigned legacy platform during a transitional period expected to last through the end of the 2016–17 fiscal year. Some functions from the original MLA site that are not yet migrated include convention registration, ballots, the online program, and the *JIL*. Important features migrated to the new platform include join/renew, My MLA, the bookstore, and the ADE and ADFL bulletins. After the launch, several interface updates were performed to optimize and improve the experience of joining the association and renewing existing memberships.

Work on the Bibliography

In collaboration with Bibliographic Information Services, the information systems staff has implemented a host of new innovations to enhance the *MLA International Bibliography*. We have introduced a new search mechanism to enable scholars to search for works they have authored and add their ORCID identifiers to the bibliography records. The works

found in the bibliography are then saved in scholars' ORCID records. Approximately 4,500 unique ORCID identifiers have been saved in bibliography records since the system went live in June 2015. In addition, users can view their ORCID information on *MLA Commons*. The bibliography system has also been upgraded to provide data imports and exports in RIS file format, a standardized tag format for expressing bibliographic citations. This upgrade allows MLA staff indexers to download EBSCO's metadata in RIS format into our citations database. With minor revision, the same scripts and setup can be reused to process other publishers' RIS data.

Production

The production staff worked on the eight books published in print and e-book formats in 2015 and on fourteen other book projects that are in various stages of production, including two online publications on *MLA Commons: Digital Pedagogy* and *Literary Studies in the Digital Age*.

Association Governance

I oversee MLA governance. Carol Zuses, coordinator of governance, has responsibility for creating and maintaining all related administrative functions.

Committees

Hundreds of MLA members help carry on the work of the association through their service on association committees. The governance of the association is in the hands of the 18-member Executive Council, the 278 members of the Delegate Assembly, and the 30 members of four other governance committees. The convention is the focus of the 12-member Program Committee and the members who in 2015 filled over 700 seats on nearly 150 forum executive committees. Publications-related work is carried out by

eight committees with a total of 98 members. Nine committees covering a range of professional issues have a total of 69 members. Finally, the 7 members of the Committee on Honors and Awards and the 74 members of the twenty-four prize-selection committees help the association recognize the outstanding scholarly work done by association members and other scholars in our fields of study.

Ballots

The association's annual elections for the second vice president, the Executive Council, the Delegate Assembly, and the forum executive committees are held in the fall. Balloting normally begins during the third week of October and ends on 10 December. Of the 24,660 members eligible to vote in the 2015 elections, 2,739 (11.1%) returned ballots.

Actions of the Delegate Assembly that require ratification by the membership are placed on a ratification ballot that members receive in the spring or the fall following the January assembly meeting. The ratification ballot covering 2015 Delegate Assembly actions on seven constitutional amendments was distributed in the spring. Of the 22,425 eligible voters, 1,626 (7.3%) returned ballots.

New Forum Structure

The process of reorganizing the association's divisions and discussion groups into forums was completed in 2015, with the ratification in May of the necessary constitutional amendments. Twelve new forums that the council approved held their first executive committee elections in the fall of 2015 and organized their first sessions for the January 2016 convention. The council approved six more new forums in October 2015, bringing the total number of forums as of January 2016 to 153.

Because the proposal for the new forum structure called for each forum to have a seat in the Delegate Assembly, it was necessary to address the question of how to accom-

moderate the increased number of delegates representing fields of study. The Elections Committee studied the question and recommended modifications to the other representational categories in the assembly (regional delegates and special-interest delegates) so that the overall size of the assembly would not increase beyond three hundred seats. The committee also recommended that the fifty-nine seats for forums that did not already have representatives (forty-seven for forums based on precursor discussion groups and twelve for the new forums that began to function in 2015) be added to the assembly over a three-year period and that the makeup of the three forum cohorts be determined by lot. The committee's final recommendation was to replace the constitutional provision for the election of a forum delegate by the forum's executive committee with a provision for the election of each forum's delegate by the membership of the forum. The 2015 Delegate Assembly approved the committee's recommendations and agreed to propose the constitutional amendments that were needed to implement the recommendations. The Committee on Amendments to the Constitution formulated specific amendments in the spring, issued the required notice to the membership in September, and reported the amendments to the 2016 assembly for action. The assembly approved the amendments; the required membership ratification vote will be held in the spring of 2016.

Advocacy Efforts and National Coalitions

The MLA Executive Council and the Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession initiated a project called MLA Action for Allies, which invites all members to show support for adjunct faculty members. The *Commons* site for the project houses resources for starting discussions in departments about the use of contingent faculty members. In the first action, proposed in conjunction with Na-

tional Adjunct Walkout Day, members were asked to respond to series of questions aimed at evaluating the use of contingent faculty members in their departments. Respondents were asked to discuss the answers to the questions with colleagues and report back about this conversation to help others.

The following statements were issued by the MLA Executive Council in 2015. Council statements are posted at www.mla.org/About-Us/Governance/Executive-Council/Executive-Council-Actions.

MLA Condemns Violence against Teachers and Students in Mexico

In its 2009 Statement on Academic Freedom, the Modern Language Association recognized that "despite a long history of the defense of academic freedom, each generation of scholars faces new challenges to its protection." The recent murders and disappearances of students and teachers in Mexico, and the threats against others in the fields of education, have created an environment in which learning and critical thinking are deemed dangerous activities. In keeping with its commitment to supporting academic freedom, the MLA condemns the violence against students and teachers in Mexico.

MLA Condemns Censorship and Suppression of Controversial Works and Writers

The Modern Language Association condemns both the censorship of work treating controversial religious subjects and physical threats directed at the authors of such work. Recent instances include the harassment of the University of Chicago Indologist Wendy Doniger and the Tamil novelist Perumal Murugan. In its 2009 Statement on Academic Freedom, the MLA reiterates its long-standing commitments to academic freedom and freedom of speech. The MLA urges its members to support scholars and writers like Doniger and Murugan whose freedoms have been threatened or denied.

Statement Condemning Texas SB11 ("Campus Carry Law")

The Modern Language Association joins other scholarly organizations in condemning Texas SB11, which allows licensed handgun carriers to bring concealed handguns into buildings on Texas campuses. Not only have such laws been proven to actually increase the likelihood of violence in general, but we as educators are also deeply concerned that the presence of handguns on college campuses may severely and negatively impact freedom of speech and academic freedom, creating a climate of intimidation and causing undue caution, particularly with regard to discussions of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, politics, and sexuality.

Our clear preference would be for the repeal of this law. Until such time, we urge university and college administrators, faculty members, and students—in the strongest terms possible—to put into place all necessary protections for speech, assembly, and everyday educational activities.

MLA Statement on Exclusion of Refugees

Given its commitment to universal academic and educational freedom, which can only be enjoyed under broad conditions of personal and collective health, safety, and access to social, political, economic, and educational institutions, the MLA condemns the unilateral decision of Governor Greg Abbott to deny refugees from Syria entry to the state of Texas. We equally condemn similar measures undertaken in other states.

We view this act as a form of collective punishment levied upon a desperate population fleeing precisely the terrible forces that the governor rightly condemns. We share the sentiments of the UN Human Rights Commission: "A world that welcomes Syrians can help defeat extremism. But a world that rejects Syrians, and especially Muslim refugees, will just feed into their propaganda."

MLA Statement on Islamophobia

After the terrible shootings in Paris and San Bernardino, we have witnessed a sharp rise in Islamophobia, the intense hatred and fear of Islam and those identifying with the religion and its culture. This includes, but is not restricted to, targeting Arabs and Arab Americans. In the United States there has been an upsurge in attacks upon and censorship and harassment of those who, as part of their scholarly work, teach about Islam. The MLA condemns any and all violations of free speech and academic freedom, including those based on race, religious affiliation, and ethnicity. We especially deplore the firings and intimidation of those teachers who aid in our understanding of Islam.

The council also added the MLA's endorsement to a statement defending tenure and academic freedom in Wisconsin, which was drafted by the American Historical Association and endorsed by nineteen other members of the American Council of Learned Societies. The joint statement is available at www.mla.org/About-Us/Governance/Executive-Council/Executive-Council-Actions/2015/Joint-Statement-Defending-Tenure-and-Academic-Freedom-in-Wisconsin.

On 14 January, in Washington, I participated in a panel, *The Emergence of the "Precariat": What Does the Loss of Stable, Well-Compensated Employment Mean for Education?*, along with Barbara Ehrenreich, Andrew Ross, and Jennie Shanker. The panel, sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute and the American Federation of Teachers, discussed the impact of the shift from tenure-track faculty positions to adjunct positions on the lives of teachers and students, on the economy, and on higher education.

On issues affecting the humanities, the MLA works with colleagues in the National Humanities Alliance (NHA). I continue to serve on the NHA's board of directors and executive committee and am the MLA's vot-

ing representative at the alliance's annual meeting. The NHA is the leading advocate for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NHA also provides congressional testimony as needed, helps organize events on Capitol Hill that promote an understanding of the importance and vitality of the humanities, confers the Sidney R. Yates Award for Distinguished Public Service to the Humanities, and keeps its members informed about the status of the appropriations process. The NHA also has a 501(c)(3) supporting foundation. The NHA Foundation advances the humanities by conducting and supporting research on the humanities and communicating the value of the humanities to a variety of audiences, including elected officials and the general public. Additional information about the NHA's work is available at the NHA Web site (www.nhalliance.org).

On issues affecting languages and international studies, the MLA works with colleagues in the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and the Coalition for International Education (CIE). The JNCL represents more than 300,000 professionals and has over sixty members, including national, regional, and state organizations encompassing most areas of the K–16 language field. At the JNCL's annual Delegate Assembly meeting, in Washington, members promote public awareness of language issues. The MLA's director of programs and ADFL, Dennis Looney, represented the MLA at the JNCL Delegate Assembly meeting in 2015.

The CIE is made up of more than thirty national higher education organizations. It informs policy makers, education and private sector officials, and the media about national needs in international and foreign language education and focuses on promoting and supporting Fulbright-Hays grants and programs authorized under Title VI of the Higher Education Act (HEA). In February 2015, the MLA signed on to the CIE's letter to the Senate Committee on Health, Educa-

tion, Labor, and Pensions requesting funding for the K–12 Foreign Language Assistance Program, which was omitted from the draft bill for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The MLA also signed on to the CIE's April letter to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and their Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) requesting funding for international education and foreign language studies programs funded through the HEA. And in July, the MLA cosigned the CIE's letter of appreciation to the House Appropriations Committee and its LHHS subcommittee for maintaining 2015 funding for international education and foreign language studies programs in the 2016 House appropriations bill. The letter also urged the House committee to keep the 2015 funding levels in place during negotiations with the Senate. On 21 September 2015, the CIE held a briefing on Capitol Hill to discuss Title VI of the HEA and Fulbright-Hays international education programs. Miriam Kazanjian, CIE consultant, organized the briefing; she represents the MLA as a lobbyist on international education issues. More than eighty people attended the briefing, which underlined the importance of the programs and their role in helping to advance the nation. During the briefing the CIE urged Congress to continue funding Title VI programs and made recommendations for changing several unfunded programs into two new programs (International Research and Innovation and Professional and Technical Competitiveness). In October, the CIE followed up on the briefing with a letter to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training that made the CIE's funding request and program recommendations official. The MLA signed on to the letter. The MLA signed on to a November letter from the CIE to the Senate

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training endorsing proposed amendments to Title I of the HEA that aimed to expand the definition of an “institution of higher education” to include not just institutions physically located in the United States or its territories but also American colleges and universities abroad that are fully accredited and licensed in the United States and meet all other requirements for program eligibility under the HEA. Also in November, the MLA signed on to the CIE’s last letter of the year to the relevant House and Senate appropriations committees on maintaining funding for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs in the 2016 budget.

The NEH receives funding through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The Department of Education is funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Department of Education programs of interest to the language community include Title VI programs for international education and foreign language studies in higher education, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), and English Language Acquisition State Grants (formerly Bilingual and Immigrant Education).

This year’s budget process began in February, when President Obama released his budget for 2016, which proposed funding the NEH at \$147.9 million. This amounted to a small increase of \$1.9 million over the NEH’s appropriation in the 2015 fiscal year. On 18 June, the House appropriations subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies released a draft bill that proposed the same funding for the NEH as in the 2015 fiscal year, \$146 million. On 23 June, the Senate appropriations subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies released

its draft bill, which also provided the NEH with level funding.

President Obama’s detailed budget for the 2016 fiscal year included \$76.2 million for Title VI programs, while the Senate requested \$47 million. The Senate’s proposal represented a significant decrease from the \$72.2 million appropriated in 2015. Programs authorized under Title VI of the HEA include Centers for International Business Education, Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships, the Institute for International Public Policy, language resource centers, and Fulbright-Hays training grants and seminars abroad. A number of Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs remained canceled for the 2016 fiscal year (e.g., Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program, American Overseas Research Centers, International Research and Studies Program). The president’s proposal for FIPSE funding was \$200 million, \$132 million more than in 2015. The funding would support the third year of the First in the World Fund, “a competitive grant program, modeled after Investing in Innovation (i3), designed to identify innovative solutions to persistent and widespread challenges to completion in postsecondary education, particularly those that affect adult learners, working students, part-time students, students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, and first-generation students.” Up to 30% of the \$200 million allocated under FIPSE would be used for projects at minority-serving institutions. The Senate did not include funds for FIPSE in its budget proposal. The president proposed \$773 million for the English Language Acquisition State Grants program, while the Senate requested \$712 million. The president’s proposal represented a \$30 million increase over the 2015 appropriation, while the Senate’s decreased funding by \$26 million.

The entire appropriations process stalled before Congress’s August recess due to amendments and counteramendments concerning whether to allow the display

and sale of the Confederate battle flag on federal property (including cemeteries). In September, with the end of the fiscal year quickly approaching, lawmakers turned their attention to a stopgap funding bill. On 30 September, the House passed a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government through 11 December with no increases in funding over 2015 appropriations except to address emergencies. The Senate then passed the same bill, and President Obama signed it into law, thereby preventing the government from shutting down on 1 October. With the government funded for the near term, Congress turned its attention to electing House leadership and to addressing the public debt limit, which the Department of the Treasury estimated would be reached on 5 November. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which the president signed into law on 2 November, provided for increasing the debt limit to accommodate budget obligations issued through 15 March 2017. Congress did not address the matter of appropriations for the 2016 fiscal year until after the Thanksgiving holiday. Two more CRs were needed to allow Congress to complete the fiscal year 2016 budget process. The president signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act on 18 December. NEH funding was set at \$147.9 million, slightly more than in 2015. Title VI programs received the same amount as in 2014 and 2015, \$72.2 million. FIPSE was funded at \$67.8 million and English Language Acquisition State Grants at \$737.4 million, the same amounts as in 2015.

This year the MLA once again cosponsored Humanities Advocacy Day, an annual event coordinated by the NHA. The purpose of the event is to promote federal support for scholarly research, education, public programs, and preservation in the humanities. It provides the MLA and other national organizations with a crucial opportunity to deliver to Congress and the administration a unified message on funding needs and priorities for the NEH and other federal agencies,

including the Department of Education, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. On 16 and 17 March, Kathleen Fitzpatrick attended the NHA's 2015 annual meeting and Humanities Advocacy Day in Washington, DC. Over the two-day period, one hundred fourteen advocates participated in a range of activities, including advocacy training, an NEH grants workshop, a humanities grants overview session, panel presentations, a keynote luncheon, policy briefings, a Capitol Hill reception, and visits to congressional offices.

The MLA is a founding member of the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), an informal coalition with no headquarters or staff. CAW's purpose is to discourage the excessive use of part- and full-time non-tenure-track faculty members in higher education and to help ensure that they receive fair treatment. Representatives of the twenty-eight member associations participate in meetings and activities. CAW's Web site (www.academicworkforce.org) links to the home pages of its member associations; to data, reports, and surveys from them; and to statements they issue on the use of contingent academic labor. The MLA continues to maintain this Web site.

The MLA is a member of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The principal administrator from each of the constituent learned societies serves as a member of the Conference of Administrative Officers (CAO). The CAO functions as the primary vehicle for maintaining and enhancing relations among the constituent learned societies and between the societies and the ACLS. The CAO meets twice a year to discuss substantive issues in the humanities as well as practical and organizational aspects of society management. The ACLS offers a leadership seminar each fall for the incoming chief elected officers and chief administrative officers of member societies. I attended the 2015 Learned Society

Leadership Seminar with Anthony Appiah, the MLA's 2015–16 first vice president.

In what ways do MLA members want their scholarly association to provide leadership on issues related to academic careers, research and publication, academic freedom, equity and diversity, the humanities workforce, professional guidelines and standards, and a whole host of other matters? These questions have been at the forefront of the Executive Council's agenda in 2015. Recognizing that scholarly associations like the MLA cannot by themselves solve problems that belong to individual institutions of higher education, the council has nevertheless taken up the challenge of providing leadership and support in key areas. From staging a protest at the annual convention in Austin against Texas campus carry laws to issuing statements condemning violence and censorship directed at students, writers, and refugees, the MLA makes its voice heard in the public arena. The association's leadership is also felt within the profession when the MLA turns

its attention to the most vulnerable members, brings members from all realms of the profession into association committees, and organizes professional development activities at the annual convention. Members with secure positions are assisting the association in these endeavors: they recognize that MLA membership is a form of solidarity and support. As I enter my final year as executive director, I want to encourage all who have the resources, monetary and otherwise, to invest in the futures of the humanities teachers and scholars who have been adversely affected in these vulnerable times. Until the institutions that employ us are also the sites of professional equity and respect for all their constituents, we will have much work to do. My colleagues and I on the MLA staff share the urgency of the challenge because we know the value of studying languages, literatures, and cultures with scholarly depth and integrity. These are the values that the MLA embodies, and they are worth fighting for.

Rosemary G. Feal

Modern Language Association of America

Statements of Financial Position, 31 August 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (including restricted cash of \$748,028 in 2015 and \$388,281 in 2014, respectively)	\$ 6,816,807	\$ 5,963,243
Investments	12,174,553	12,260,459
Accounts receivable, net	1,834,424	1,816,365
Inventories, net	163,045	131,343
Prepaid expenses and other assets	3,137,087	2,815,752
Property and equipment, net	1,203,182	476,945
Total assets	\$25,329,098	\$23,464,107
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ 795,885	\$ 634,673
Deferred revenue	1,286,734	1,276,677
Deferred rent obligation	311,707	125,302
Obligations under capital leases	101,263	102,689
Total liabilities	2,495,589	2,139,341
Commitments (Note H)		
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	18,036,346	18,525,254
Temporarily restricted	4,747,785	2,750,313
Permanently restricted	49,378	49,199
Total net assets	22,833,509	21,324,766
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:	\$25,329,098	\$23,464,107

Modern Language Association of America

Statements of Activities for the Years Ended 31 August 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS:		
Revenues:		
Publications sales and royalties	\$ 9,691,491	\$10,337,192
Membership dues	2,312,626	2,352,844
Annual meeting registrations and sundry sales	1,149,295	1,246,971
Membership and library subscriptions	364,821	372,285
Advertising and exhibit	395,990	437,180
Job information service	818,380	855,978
Computer center service sales	25,542	23,095
Dividends and interest, net	243,985	129,435
Contributions	28,056	31,374
Other	75,535	87,912
Total	\$15,105,721	\$15,874,266
Net assets released from restrictions	369,595	206,800
Total unrestricted revenues	15,475,316	16,081,066
Expenses:		
Bibliography and publications	6,728,672	6,365,880
Convention and special meetings	1,392,754	1,494,318
Scholarly and professional activities	2,814,600	3,022,722
Membership maintenance and development	1,220,587	1,091,026
Total program expenses	12,156,613	11,973,946
Administrative and general	3,488,335	3,176,774
Total expenses	15,644,948	15,150,720
RESULTS FROM OPERATIONS	(169,632)	930,346
Net realized and unrealized (losses) gains on investments	(319,276)	370,677
CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	(488,908)	1,301,023
CHANGES IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS:		
Contributions and grants	2,370,723	120,068
Dividends and interest, net	187,328	85,876
Net realized and unrealized (losses) gains on investments	(190,984)	319,431
Royalties	—	101
Total temporarily restricted revenues	2,367,067	525,476
Net assets released from restrictions	(369,595)	(206,800)
INCREASE IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	1,997,472	318,676
INCREASE IN PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS:		
Dividends and interest, net	179	155
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	1,508,743	1,619,854
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	21,324,766	19,704,912
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$22,833,509	\$21,324,766

See notes to financial statements.

Modern Language Association of America

Statements of Cash Flows for the Years Ended 31 August 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in net assets	\$1,508,743	\$1,619,854
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	320,099	262,885
Decrease in provision of bad debt	(474)	(6,172)
Net realized and unrealized losses (gains) on investments	510,260	(690,108)
Changes in:		
Accounts receivable	(17,585)	54,428
Inventories	(31,702)	59,985
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(321,335)	(169,821)
Accounts payable and other liabilities	161,212	(29,977)
Deferred revenue	10,057	24,740
Deferred rent obligation	186,405	(136,694)
Net cash provided by operating activities	2,325,680	989,120
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of property and equipment	(1,014,786)	(167,048)
Purchases of investments	(2,988,151)	(589,884)
Proceeds from sales of investments	2,563,797	385,362
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,439,140)	(371,570)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Principal payments on capital lease obligations	(32,976)	(37,635)
INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	853,564	579,915
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	5,963,243	5,383,328
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, END OF YEAR	\$6,816,807	\$5,963,243
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURE OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION:		
Interest expense incurred under obligation of capital leases	\$ 15,379	\$ 5,262
Excise and unrelated-business-income taxes paid	\$ 2,425	\$ 4,525

See notes to financial statements.

Modern Language Association of America

Notes to Financial Statements as of and for the Years Ended 31 August 2015 and 2014

A. Organization and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

1. *Organization*—The Modern Language Association of America (“MLA”) is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in the state of Maryland, that was founded in 1883 to promote the study and teaching of languages and literatures through its programs, publications, annual convention, and advocacy work. An international association of nearly 25,000 scholars and teachers, the MLA exists to support the intellectual and professional lives of its members; it provides opportunities for members to share their scholarly work and teaching experiences with colleagues, discuss trends in the academy, and advocate humanities education and workplace equity.

The MLA is exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, except as to its net unrelated business income, and from state and local taxes under comparable laws.

2. *Basis of Accounting*—The accompanying financial statements of the MLA have been prepared using the accrual basis of accounting and conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applicable to not-for-profit organizations.

3. *Use of Estimates*—The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenses, as well as the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities. Actual results could differ from those estimates and assumptions.

4. *Cash Equivalents*—Cash equivalents consist of highly liquid investments that mature in three months or less from date of purchase, except that certificates of deposit are deemed cash equivalents regardless of when they mature. Cash equivalents considered to be part of the MLA’s investment portfolio are reflected as investments in the accompanying financial statements.

5. *Investments*—The MLA holds shares in mutual funds that invest in equity and fixed-income securities. The shares are reported at their fair value, as determined by the related investment manager or adviser.

Investment transactions are recorded on a trade-date basis. Realized gains or losses on in-

vestments are determined by a comparison of the average cost of acquisition with the proceeds at the time of disposition. The earnings from dividends and interest are recognized when earned. Donated securities are recorded at their fair values as determined on the dates of donation, and are sold on receipt or when administratively feasible.

Investment expenses include fees for the services of bank trustees, investment managers, and custodians. The balances of investment management fees disclosed in Note B include the specific fees charged by the MLA’s investment managers in each fiscal year; they do not include the fees that are embedded in investment accounts and transactions.

6. *Inventories*—Inventories, which consist principally of books and other publications, are carried at the lower of cost or market. The first-in, first-out (FIFO) cost assumption is used. The cost of goods sold, \$131,495 and \$169,869 for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014, respectively, is included in the bibliography and publications expense. Management estimates that, for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014, respectively, approximately \$478,000 and \$499,000 of inventory were reserved for oversupply.

7. *Prepaid Expenses*—Prepaid expenses include prepaid *MLA International Bibliography* costs incurred for future issues.

8. *Property and Equipment*—Furniture, equipment, and leasehold improvements are reported at their costs on the dates of acquisition or their fair values on the dates of donation. The MLA capitalizes property and equipment that have a cost of \$2,000 or more and useful lives greater than one year. Depreciation is provided using the straight-line method over three to ten years, the range of the estimated useful lives of the related assets. Leasehold improvements are amortized over the remaining lease term or the useful lives of the improvements, whichever is shorter.

Management evaluates the recoverability of the investment in long-lived assets on an ongoing basis and recognizes any impairment in the year of determination. Long-lived assets were tested for impairment as of 31 August 2015 and 2014, and in the opinion of management there were no impairments. It is reasonably possible that relevant conditions could change in the near term and necessitate a change in management’s estimate of the recoverability of these assets.

9. *Accrued Vacation*—Accrued vacation is a liability that represents the MLA's obligation for the cost of unused employee vacation time payable in the event of employee departures. The obligation is recalculated every year. At 31 August 2015 and 2014, the accrued vacation obligation was approximately \$117,000 and \$90,000, respectively, and it is reported as part of accounts payable and other liabilities in the accompanying statements of financial position.

10. *Deferred Revenue*—Dues and library subscriptions that relate to the fiscal year after the one in which they are received are deferred and recognized as revenue over the applicable membership and subscription periods, as services are rendered and the related costs are incurred.

11. *Deferred Rent Obligation*—Total rent expense under the lease agreement is amortized using the straight-line method over the term of the lease. The difference between rent expense incurred and the rental amounts paid, which is attributed to scheduled rent increases and abatements, is reported as a "deferred rent obligation" in the accompanying statements of financial position.

12. Net Assets

(i) *Unrestricted*—Unrestricted net assets represent those resources that are not subject to donor restrictions and are available for current operations.

(ii) *Temporarily Restricted*—Temporarily restricted net assets represent those resources that are subject to the requirements of Maryland's Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act ("UPMIFA") and the use of which has been restricted by donors or state law. When a donor restriction ends—that is, when a stipulated time restriction expires, a purpose restriction is accomplished, or the funds are appropriated through an action of the Executive Council—temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified as unrestricted net assets and reported in the accompanying statements of activities as "net assets released from restrictions."

(iii) *Permanently Restricted*—Permanently restricted net assets represent those resources the principal of which was originally restricted in perpetuity by donors. The purposes for which the income and net capital appreciation arising from the underlying assets may be used depend on the wishes of those donors. Under the terms of UPMIFA, those earnings are classified as temporarily restricted in the accompanying statements of activities, pending action by the Executive Council.

13. Revenue Recognition

(i) *Publication Sales and Royalties*—Payments for publication sales are recognized as income at the time of sale. Revenue for backordered publications is recognized when the publication is shipped. Royalty payments are recognized as revenue when earned.

(ii) *Job Information List*—Payments for job postings to the *JIL* are recognized as income in the year in which the posting appears online.

(iii) *Contributions and Grants*—Contributions to the MLA are recognized as revenue on the receipt of cash or other assets or of unconditional pledges. Contributions are recorded as temporarily or permanently restricted if their donors placed restrictions on their use. Conditional contributions are recorded when the specified conditions have been met. Contributions to be received over more than a year are discounted at an interest rate commensurate with the risk involved.

Grant revenue is based on the terms of each grant and is available for unrestricted use unless the grantor restricts the use thereof, on a temporary or permanent basis.

(iv) *Membership Dues*—Membership dues are recorded when payment is received in the applicable membership period. Any portion applicable to a subsequent period is reported as deferred revenue. Membership in the MLA is open to those who are interested in the study and teaching of the modern languages and their literatures. Memberships in the MLA's Association of Departments of English (ADE) and Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) are institutional and are open to administrators of English and foreign language departments. Membership dues earned from MLA, ADE, and ADFL memberships for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014 were \$1,868,031, \$259,470, \$185,125, and \$1,877,429, \$273,840, \$201,575, respectively.

14. *Functional Allocation of Expenses*—The costs of providing the various programs and supporting services have been summarized on a functional basis in the accompanying statements of activities. Accordingly, management has allocated certain costs among the program and management areas, using appropriate measurement methodologies.

15. *Awards and Prizes*—Publication awards and prizes are recorded as an expense and liability subsequent to triannual, biannual, or annual reviews and approvals by a designated award committee.

16. *Advertising Costs*—Advertising costs are expensed as they are incurred. Advertising expense was approximately \$167,000 and \$151,000 for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014, respectively.
17. *Endowment Funds*—The MLA reports all disclosures applicable to its funds designated as part of its endowment.
18. *Income Tax Uncertainties*—The MLA is subject to the provisions of Accounting Standards Codification (“ASC”) Topic 740, *Income Taxes*, of the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) as it relates to accounting for and reporting uncertainty in income taxes. The MLA is subject to potential excise taxes relating to its income from selling advertising space and renting mailing lists; however, because of the MLA’s general tax-exempt status, ASC Topic 740 has not had, and is not expected to have, a material impact on the MLA’s financial statements.
19. *Fair-Value Measurement*—The MLA reports a fair-value measurement of all applicable financial assets and liabilities, including investments, receivables, and payables.
20. *Reclassification*—Certain amounts included in the prior year’s financial statements have been reclassified to conform to the current year’s presentation.
21. *Subsequent Events and Transactions*—In the accompanying financial statements for the fiscal year ended 31 August 2015, the MLA considers the accounting treatments and related disclosures that may be required as the result of events and transactions that occurred between the fiscal year-end and 27 February 2016, the date when the financial statements were issued.

B. Investments

At each fiscal year-end, investments consisted of the following:

	2015	2014
Certificates of deposit	\$ 107,425	\$ 107,354
Money market funds	42,120	2,344
Mutual funds:		
Growth	4,480,506	4,751,029
Fixed income	7,544,502	7,399,732
	<u>\$12,174,553</u>	<u>\$12,260,459</u>

During each fiscal year, investment (losses) income consisted of the following:

	2015	2014
Dividends and interest	\$443,211	\$223,343
Realized gains	380,252	74,403
Unrealized (losses) gains	(890,512)	615,705
Investment fees	(11,719)	(7,877)
	<u>\$ (78,768)</u>	<u>\$905,574</u>

The FASB’s ASC Topic 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, establishes a three-level valuation hierarchy of fair-value measurements. These valuation techniques are based on observable and unobservable inputs. Observable inputs reflect market data obtained from independent sources, while unobservable inputs reflect market assumptions. These two types of inputs create the following fair-value hierarchy:

Level 1: Valuations are based on observable inputs that reflect quoted market prices in active markets for the same or identical assets and liabilities at the reporting date.

Level 2: Valuations are based on (i) quoted prices for the investments or similar investments in active markets, or (ii) quoted prices for the investments or similar investments in markets that are not active, or (iii) pricing inputs other than quoted prices that are directly or indirectly observable on the reporting date. Level 2 assets include those investments that are redeemable on or near the balance sheet date and for which a model for valuation was derived.

Level 3: Valuations are based on unobservable pricing inputs and include situations where (i) there is little, if any, market activity for the investments, or (ii) the investments cannot be independently valued, or (iii) the investments cannot be immediately redeemed at or near the fiscal year-end.

The MLA’s investments were valued under Level 1 of the fair-value hierarchy at 31 August 2015 and 2014, and there were no transfers between levels during either year.

C. Accounts Receivable

At each year-end, accounts receivable consisted of amounts due to the MLA for exchange-type transactions. All amounts are due within one year. Relying on its past experience, management has reserved approximately \$11,000 of accounts receivable for uncollectible accounts for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014.

D. Property and Equipment

At each fiscal year-end, property and equipment consisted of the following:

	2015	2014
Furniture and equipment	\$1,422,764	\$1,765,865
Leasehold improvements	327,279	2,954,421
	<u>1,750,043</u>	<u>4,720,286</u>
Less accumulated depreciation and amortization	(546,861)	(4,243,341)
	<u>\$1,203,182</u>	<u>\$ 476,945</u>

Depreciation and amortization expense for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014 was \$300,099 and \$262,885, respectively. During the fiscal year 2015, the MLA wrote off fully depreciated furniture, equipment, and leasehold improvements with an original cost of approximately \$3,959,569.

E. Retirement Benefits

The MLA sponsors two plans established with the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association and College Retirement Equities Fund ("TIAA-CREF"): a defined-contribution plan and a tax-deferred annuity plan, which offer coverage to all eligible employees. After two years of continuous employment at the MLA, eligible employees are enrolled in the defined-contribution plan, and the MLA

contributes 8% of the employee's salary to an individual account established in the employee's name. Total contributions from the MLA to the defined-contribution plan in the fiscal years that ended on 31 August 2015 and 2014 were approximately \$482,000 and \$515,000, respectively. Immediately upon employment, an eligible employee may participate in the tax-deferred annuity plan by making voluntary contributions to the plan within the Internal Revenue Service guidelines. The MLA makes no contributions to the tax-deferred annuity plan.

F. Temporarily Restricted Net Assets

At each fiscal year-end, temporarily restricted net assets (after investment gains and losses were allocated) were categorized as follows:

	BALANCE, 1 SEPTEMBER 2014	ADDITIONS & MARKET ADJUSTMENTS	RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS	BALANCE, 31 AUGUST 2015
Modern Language Materials Revolving Fund	\$ 94,537	\$ —	\$ 25,000	\$ 69,537
John Louis Haney Fund	46,086	6,045	20,000	32,131
Good Neighbor Fund	26,364	7,342	6,100	27,606
Professional Education Assistance—Graduate Students	36,431	35,715	36,000	36,146
Professional Education Assistance—Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members	24,301	20,193	24,000	20,494
Professional Education Assistance—Travel Grants	—	1,772	—	1,772
Promotion of the Profession Fund	57,174	6,971	25,000	39,145
Katrina Assistance Fund	494	—	—	494
Elliot Gilbert Fund	5,142	56	—	5,198
Lois Roth Award Fund	63	1	—	64
Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Culture	10,669	(26)	1,000	9,643
Matei Calinescu Prize in 20th/21st-Century Literature	—	100,755	416	100,339
Howard Marraro Prize Fund	21,063	(316)	1,000	19,747
Morton Cohen Award Fund	8,295	(374)	—	7,921
Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize Fund	86,325	(929)	1,526	83,870
Phyllis Franklin Award for Public Advocacy of the Humanities	80,778	6,849	—	87,627
Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Award Fund	2,203,715	(26,723)	25,525	2,151,467
Scaglione Publications Subvention	—	6,453	6,453	—
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant—Occupational Horizons	40,416	251	40,667	—
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant— <i>Humanities Commons</i>	8,460	217,103	1,849	223,714
The National Endowment for the Humanities grant— <i>Humanities CORE</i>	—	24,081	24,081	—
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant—Connected Academics	—	1,920,338	91,966	1,828,372
American Council for International Education grant—Enrollment Survey	—	41,510	39,012	2,498
TOTAL TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	<u>\$2,750,313</u>	<u>\$2,367,067</u>	<u>\$369,595</u>	<u>\$4,747,785</u>

	BALANCE, 1 SEPTEMBER 2013	ADDITIONS & MARKET ADJUSTMENTS	RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS	BALANCE, 31 AUGUST 2014
Modern Language Materials Revolving Fund	\$ 94,436	\$ 101	\$ —	\$ 94,537
John Louis Haney Fund	40,485	5,601	—	46,086
Good Neighbor Fund	21,424	7,115	2,175	26,364
Professional Education Assistance—Graduate Students	32,696	36,425	32,690	36,431
Professional Education Assistance for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members	15,475	20,226	11,400	24,301
Promotion of the Profession	49,029	8,145	—	57,174
Katrina Assistance Fund	494	—	—	494
Elliot Gilbert Fund	5,094	48	—	5,142
Lois Roth Award Fund	62	1,001	1,000	63
Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Culture	10,612	57	—	10,669
Howard Marraro Prize Income Fund	20,438	625	—	21,063
Morton Cohen Award Fund	8,692	603	1,000	8,295
Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize Fund	86,296	1,518	1,489	86,325
Phyllis Franklin Award for Public Advocacy of the Humanities	78,708	10,381	8,311	80,778
Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Award Fund	1,849,592	384,343	30,220	2,203,715
Scaglione Publications Subvention	—	6,616	6,616	—
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant—Occupational Horizons	77,572	567	37,723	40,416
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant— <i>Humanities Commons</i>	40,532	185	32,257	8,460
The National Endowment for the Humanities grant— Enrollment Survey	—	30,000	30,000	—
The National Endowment for the Humanities grant— <i>Humanities CORE</i>	—	11,919	11,919	—
TOTAL TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	<u>\$2,431,637</u>	<u>\$525,476</u>	<u>\$206,800</u>	<u>\$2,750,313</u>

G. Accounting for and Reporting Endowments

1. *The Funds*—The MLA’s endowment funds consist of one fund designated by the Executive Council and two donor-restricted individual funds established for awards for literature work. As required by generally accepted accounting principles, the classification and reporting of net assets associated with endowment funds are based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions.

The MLA pools its endowment, under the direction of the trustees, and earnings on the pooled investments are allocated pro rata to each of the funds.

2. *Interpretation of Relevant Law*—UPMIFA is applicable to all the MLA’s institutional funds, including its donor-restricted endowment funds. The Executive Council adheres to UPMIFA’s requirements.

3. *Endowment Net Composition by Type of Fund at Each Fiscal Year-End*

31 August 2015				
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Donor-restricted endowment funds	—	\$26,855	\$49,378	\$ 76,233
Executive Council–designated endowment fund	\$3,895,752	—	—	3,895,752
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>\$3,895,752</u>	<u>\$26,855</u>	<u>\$49,378</u>	<u>\$3,971,985</u>

31 August 2014				
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Donor-restricted endowment funds	—	\$27,790	\$49,199	\$ 76,989
Executive Council–designated endowment fund	\$4,100,818	—	—	4,100,818
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>\$4,100,818</u>	<u>\$27,790</u>	<u>\$49,199</u>	<u>\$4,177,807</u>

4. *Changes in Endowment Net Assets during Each Fiscal Year*

31 August 2015				
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
ENDOWMENT NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>\$4,100,818</u>	<u>\$27,790</u>	<u>\$49,199</u>	<u>\$4,177,807</u>
Investment return:				
Investment income	236,026	465	179	236,670
Net depreciation, realized and unrealized	(469,149)	(400)	—	(469,549)
Total investment return	<u>(233,123)</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>179</u>	<u>(232,879)</u>
Contributions	28,057	—	—	28,057
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	—	(1,000)	—	(1,000)
	<u>28,057</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>27,057</u>
ENDOWMENT NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$3,895,752</u>	<u>\$26,855</u>	<u>\$49,378</u>	<u>\$3,971,985</u>

31 August 2014				
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
ENDOWMENT NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>\$3,598,932</u>	<u>\$29,128</u>	<u>\$49,044</u>	<u>\$3,677,104</u>
Investment return:				
Investment income	100,244	416	155	100,815
Net appreciation (depreciation), realized and unrealized	370,268	(754)	—	369,514
Total investment return	<u>470,512</u>	<u>(338)</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>470,329</u>
Contributions	31,374	—	—	31,374
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	—	(1,000)	—	(1,000)
	<u>31,374</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>30,374</u>
ENDOWMENT NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$4,100,818</u>	<u>\$27,790</u>	<u>\$49,199</u>	<u>\$4,177,807</u>

5. *Return Objectives and Risk Parameters*—The MLA has adopted an investment policy for endowment assets that attempts to provide a predictable stream of funding for programs supported by its endowment, while seeking to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment assets and assuming a moderate level of investment risk.

6. *Strategies Used for Achieving Objectives*—To satisfy its long-term rate-of-return objectives, the MLA relies on a total-return strategy in which investment returns are achieved through both capital appreciation (realized and unrealized) and current yield (interest and dividends). The MLA targets a diversified asset allocation that emphasizes cash-based investments to achieve its long-term return objectives, within prudent risk constraints.

7. *Spending Policy and Its Relation to Investment Objectives*—The MLA appropriates a set amount from each donor-restricted fund for an award. The determination of the amount and frequency of the award has been based on the average rate of return on the underlying investments. The MLA does not have a formal policy of drawing down the endowment fund designated by the Executive Council. Instead, management determines a prudent amount to spend in each fiscal year by considering the long-term expected return on the endowment assets with the goal of maintaining the value of the endowment assets held in perpetuity or for a specified term.

8. *Funds with Deficiencies*—From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor-restricted endowment funds may fall below the level that the donor or UPMIFA may require the MLA to retain in a fund of perpetual duration. There were no such deficiencies on 31 August 2015 and 2014.

H. Commitments

During 2015, the MLA relocated its offices and entered into a long-term lease agreement for its office facilities, which expires in April 2036. The lease contains escalation clauses relating to real estate taxes and other building expenses. Under

the lease agreement, the MLA received an eleven-month rent abatement, which has been deferred and will be amortized over the term of the lease. The future minimum payments under this lease are \$1,246,829 per annum for the fiscal years ending 31 August 2016 through 31 August 2019 and \$21,092,184 thereafter.

Rent expense for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014 was \$1,521,179 and \$1,454,751, respectively. As required by the lease, for the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014 \$748,028 and \$388,281 in cash, respectively, were pledged as collateral against a letter of credit.

The MLA has various leases with third-party vendors for office equipment totaling \$129,782 that met the requirements for treatment as capital leases. The related assets and liabilities discounted on a variable-rate basis amounted to \$144,528 and are included in property and equipment and obligations under capital leases, respectively, in the accompanying statements of financial position. For the fiscal years ended 31 August 2015 and 2014, \$15,364 and \$5,262, respectively, represent interest expense on these leases, and \$36,742 and \$35,599, respectively, represent lease amortization expense. Both are included as administrative and general expenses in the accompanying financial statements.

Future minimum payments under office equipment leases are as follows, for fiscal years ending 31 August: 2016, \$42,012; 2017, \$42,012; 2018, \$36,657; 2019, \$14,222; and 2020, \$9,625. The total for the five years is \$144,528. When the amount representing interest (\$43,265) is subtracted, the result is \$101,263, which is the present value of the minimum lease payments for the five years.

I. Credit Risk

The MLA places its cash equivalents with high-credit-quality financial institutions in amounts that, from time to time, may exceed federal insurance limits. The MLA's management believes there is no substantial risk of loss associated with the failure of these financial institutions.

Independent Auditors' Report

Executive Council
Modern Language Association of America
New York, New York

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Modern Language Association of America (the "MLA"), which comprise the statements of financial position as of August 31, 2015 and 2014, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The MLA's management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the organization's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Modern Language Association of America as of August 31, 2015 and 2014, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

EisnerAmper LLP
New York, New York
February 27, 2016

Minutes of the MLA Delegate Assembly

THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY MET ON 9 JANUARY 2016 AT THE JW MARRIOTT AUSTIN HOTEL. First Vice President Kwame Anthony Appiah presided. The assembly was called to order at 12:44 p.m. The chair made preliminary announcements about the conduct of the meeting and called for a demonstration of the electronic voting system to be used during the meeting and for an explanation of the light at the podium that would warn speakers when their allotted time was about to expire. The chair also explained that, because the meeting was open to all MLA members and to credentialed members of the press, speakers should have no expectation of confidentiality. He added that tweeting was allowed but that no photography or voice or video recording was permitted. The chair announced the quorum for the meeting, which was 85 delegates, because 170 delegates had signed in for the meeting at the beginning. [Note: Of the 270 delegates, 198 (73%) attended all or part of the meeting (see the list that follows for the names of the delegates in attendance).]

1. On behalf of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee (DAOC), Mecca Jamilah Sullivan moved the adoption of the agenda that had been sent to the assembly, subject to emergency change. Margaret Hanzimanolis proposed a motion to amend the agenda so that item 9 (a), Emergency Resolutions, would be considered immediately after item 7, Open Discussion. This motion to amend was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion of the amendment. Hanzimanolis said she was concerned about a possible loss of quorum late in the meeting, which would affect the assembly's ability to vote on the emergency resolution that the assembly had received. The assembly's consideration of the reports included in item 8 would not be similarly affected, since the reports did not require any votes. Stephanie Kirk, chair of the DAOC, spoke against the amendment, noting that delegates and others had planned their attendance based on the published agenda. Since there was no further discussion, the chair stated the question on the amendment and asked the assembly to vote. The assembly approved the amendment by a vote of 102 yes and 56 no. The chair asked if there was further discussion of the now-amended agenda. Since there was none, the chair asked if there were objections to adopting the amended version of the agenda. There were no objections, so the chair declared the amended agenda adopted by unanimous consent.

Sullivan then offered a motion on behalf of the DAOC that the rules presented to the assembly be adopted. This motion occasioned no discussion and no objections. The chair therefore declared the rules adopted by unanimous consent.

Again on behalf of the DAOC, Sullivan moved that the assembly approve the minutes of the January 2015 meeting as printed in the May 2015 issue of *PMLA*. The chair asked if

there were corrections. Since no corrections were offered, the chair declared the minutes approved as published.

2. The assembly elected two of its members, Cheryl Narumi Naruse (English, Univ. of Dayton) and Heather Willis Allen (French, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison), to the DAOC for three-year terms (from 11 Jan. 2016 through the close of the Jan. 2019 convention). In the election of a delegate to serve on the Executive Council, Angelika Bammer (humanities, Emory Univ.) was elected for a four-year term (from 11 Jan. 2016 through the close of the Jan. 2020 convention). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the current officers of the association, the assembly elected Jane K. Brown (German, Univ. of Washington, Seattle), David Theo Goldberg (comparative literature, Univ. of California, Irvine), and Anjali Prabhu (French, Wellesley Coll.) to the Nominating Committee for two-year terms (2016–17). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the DAOC, the assembly elected the following persons to the Elections Committee for two-year terms (2016–17): Kanika Batra (Texas Tech Univ.), Monica Diaz (Univ. of Kentucky), Saree Makdisi (Univ. of California, Irvine), and Ato Quayson (Univ. of Toronto).

3. The assembly received a report from the Executive Council on the council's consideration in February 2015 of the implementation of the first section of Motion 2015-1, which called for increasing the representation of part-time faculty members in MLA governance roles and on MLA committees (see May 2015 *PMLA* 890). Stephanie Kirk presented the report to the assembly. She explained that the council could not be sure that its decisions on the implementation of the motion would fulfill the assembly's wishes because the meaning of *part-time* was unclear. The council noted that those who teach on a part-time basis occupy a wide range of institutional roles and receive varied levels of compensation and benefits. Documents that the council had consulted, including one from the American Association of University Professors, did not provide a definition of the term, so the council returned the motion to the assembly with a request for the assembly's guidance on a definition of the term.

Since the next agenda item, a request from the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution for clarification of the second section of Motion 2015-1 (see May 2015 *PMLA* 890–92), dealt with the same issue, the chair proposed to combine the discussion of the council's report and the committee's request. Samer Ali, who presented the committee's request to the assembly, called for discussion of possible definitions of *part-time* based on such criteria as a specific percentage of a full-time course load, eligibility for benefits, or per-course employment and for discussion of the relation between part-time status and other statuses (e.g., retired, non-tenure-track). Ali also drew the assembly's attention to a second question from the committee: whether it was the assembly's intent to add a seat to the council to allow for the representation of part-time faculty members or to provide for this representation within the current limits on the size of the council.

The chair proposed that the assembly begin the combined discussion of the council's report and the committee's request by spending ten minutes on the question of the defining criteria for part-time faculty members. After speakers argued for and against relying on institutions' definitions of *part-time* or on one or another of the criteria mentioned in the council's report, the chair asked for a specific proposal to discuss. Margaret Hanzimanolis, one of the proposers of Motion 2015-1, offered a motion that the MLA use the definition of full-time faculty that the National Center for Education Statistics uses for its Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System: "As defined by the institution. The type of appointment at the snapshot date determines whether an employee is full-time or part-time. The employee's term of contract is not considered in making the determination of full- or part-time." This motion was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion. A speaker asked if the MLA's dues categories were based on employment status and could therefore provide the needed definition. Rosemary Feal explained that, except for the graduate student category, the dues categories were based on income, not on academic rank or position. She added that members are asked to provide demographic information but that the information collected does not allow the staff to compile comprehensive statistics on members' employment status because some members do not provide the requested information while others identify in multiple ways. The chair called for further discussion of the motion. One speaker argued against the motion because the definition it provided—*part-time* as the absence of full-time status—would not be helpful to the Executive Council. Two speakers said that relying on self-identification by part-timers would be the cleanest way to provide a definition. There were also questions about how a person who holds a full-time position at one institution and a part-time position at another would be counted and about the distinction that the 2015 motion makes between part-time and contingent faculty members. Hanzimanolis responded to this last question by saying that *contingent* was an umbrella term that included part-timers but that her aim was to separate out part-time faculty members and address the disadvantages associated with part-time status. She then asked the chair if she could withdraw her motion and propose instead the use of self-identification for part-time faculty members. Noting that only the assembly could authorize the withdrawal of the motion, the chair asked if there were any objections to allowing the withdrawal of the motion. Since there were no objections, the motion was withdrawn. Hanzimanolis then offered a motion to use self-identification at the time of joining the association or renewing membership to determine part-time employment status. This motion was seconded, and the chair opened the floor for discussion. Feal offered the following clarification. The income-based dues categories that members select are not verified by the MLA staff, and members' self-identifications will not be verified. As a

consequence, some self-identified part-timers may be business people or distinguished writers or retirees who teach one course. One speaker suggested that self-identification as a part-time faculty member was insufficient and that an income criterion be added. The next speaker argued in favor of the motion, since it provided a straightforward definition for *part-time* and since voters would be able to verify candidates' professional status. Another speaker argued for the extension of the process of self-identification to other categories of contingent faculty members. The discussion came to an end, and the chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion to use self-identification to determine members' part-time employment status. The assembly approved the motion by a vote of 148 yes and 18 no.

The chair then asked the assembly to address the second question from the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution: whether it was the assembly's intent to add a seat to the council to allow for the representation of part-time faculty members. He called for ten minutes of discussion. Hanzimanolis offered a motion to add a council seat, noting that this was the intention behind the use of the verb *create* in the 2015 motion. This motion was seconded. After consulting with the parliamentarian, the chair explained the effect that a defeat of the motion would have: the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution would formulate an amendment—to be submitted to the 2017 Delegate Assembly for a vote—to fulfill the aim of the 2015 motion through the use of an existing council seat. He then opened the floor for discussion of the motion. Speakers made several arguments against the motion: the Nominating Committee has been careful to provide for representation of different employment categories and should be allowed to continue that work; the council might grow to be too large if representation for more employment categories were mandated; expanding the size of the council would add to the cost of council meetings; enlarging the council would dilute the impact and effectiveness of the added voice for part-time faculty members. Arguing for the motion, one speaker emphasized the importance of having representation on the council for part-time faculty members. When there was no further discussion, the chair restated the question, reiterated his explanation of the effect of voting no, and asked the assembly to vote on the motion. The assembly defeated the motion; the vote was 46 yes and 122 no.

4. The assembly received a report from the Elections Committee that covered three items: a proposed nomination process for forum delegates that would be implemented once the task of electing forum delegates was transferred from the forums' executive committees to the forums' membership (see next item) and two revised recommendations, on regional representation and on professional-issues representation, that were based on the 2015 assembly's discussion of the committee's original recommendations (see May 2015 *PMLA* 874–76). The chair recognized Julie Rak, who presented the report on behalf of

the DAOC and moved that the assembly adopt the committee's proposed nomination process and two revised recommendations. The chair ruled that the motions pertaining to the three items in the report would be considered separately, reiterated the time limits applicable to the discussion, and opened the floor for discussion of the nomination process for forum delegates proposed by the committee:

The nomination process for forum delegates will be modeled on the nomination process for forum executive committees. That is, the voting members of the forum's executive committee will be responsible for nominating one candidate and for reviewing all the nominees suggested by the membership (including self-nominations) and choosing from these one candidate to be paired with the executive committee's choice. Membership suggestions will be solicited through the forums' groups on *MLA Commons*. If fewer than three suggestions are received from the membership, the executive committee will be encouraged to give serious consideration to these suggestions but will not be required to use them. If there are no suggestions from the membership, the executive committee will nominate both candidates. Before their names are placed on the ballot, nominees must agree to accept the nomination and to provide candidate information and a statement on matters of professional concern. A ballot for each forum delegate election will be made available to members who have a primary affiliation with the forum in question. Elected forum delegates will be required to have a primary affiliation with the forum they represent.

In response to a question about primary forum affiliations, Rosemary Feal explained that all MLA members would have the opportunity to establish primary affiliations with up to five forums and that the primary affiliation conferred the right to vote in forum executive committee elections and forum delegate elections. Members would also be able to join as many forum groups on *MLA Commons* as they wish, but participation in a *Commons* group did not establish a primary affiliation. Discussion came to a close after one speaker commented on the benefits of the new approach to the nomination and election of forum delegates, and the chair asked the assembly to vote on the proposed nomination process. The assembly approved it by a vote of 145 yes and 4 no.

The chair called for discussion of the committee's revised recommendation on regional representation:

The committee recommends that each of the seven current electoral regions be allocated eight seats, for a total of fifty-six regional delegates, and that one seat in each region be reserved for a graduate student. It should be noted that the committee's intention is to use the remaining seats in each region to provide representation for different ranks (assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, adjunct professor) and types of institutions.

Joshua Lund, assembly member and chair of the Elections Committee, explained in response to a question from a delegate that the increase in the number of seats in each region from five to eight was a way to accommodate the 2015 assembly’s concern that the original recommendation reduced regional representation too much and the committee’s concern that a very large increase in the overall size of the assembly would make meetings unworkable. Another delegate questioned the proposed decrease in graduate student representation. Christopher Lupke, assembly member and immediate past chair of the Elections Committee, noted that the committee considered one graduate student seat in each region to be a minimum and that the eight seats gave the committee leeway to provide more representation of various professional statuses. He added that graduate students would also hold other types of assembly seats, including the six professional-issues seats that the committee had proposed. The chair asked for further discussion of the revised recommendation on regional representation. Since no one came forward, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the recommendation. The assembly approved it by a vote of 136 yes and 17 no.

The chair then called for discussion of the committee’s revised recommendation on professional-issues representation, which consisted in the following list of professional issues, with seat allocations:

Category	Seats
Independent Scholars	1
Retired Scholars	1
Careers outside the Classroom	2
*Full-Time Contingent/Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members	3
*Part-Time Contingent/Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members	3
Scholars Residing outside the US and Canada	2
Disability in the Profession	2
Race and Ethnicity in the Profession	3
LGBTQ in the Profession	3
Women and Gender in the Profession	3
Continuing, Distance, and Online Education	2
Composition, Rhetoric, and Writing Programs	3
Creative Writing Programs	2
Language Programs	3
Less Commonly Taught Language Programs	2
Community Colleges	6
Graduate Students	6
Academic Freedom	2
Academic Labor	2
Publishing Issues in the Profession	2
Libraries and Archives	2

The chair noted that the category names with asterisks presented a question for the assembly—Which term, *contingent* or *non-tenure-track*, did the assembly prefer?—that would be voted on separately, at the end of the discussion of the overall list of categories. He then opened the floor

for that discussion. Elizabeth Losh said she was concerned about the conflation of continuing education with distance and online education since the two areas involved different issues. She proposed a motion to amend the category list by splitting the single category with two seats into two categories, Continuing Education and Distance and Online Education, with one seat each. This motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion. After brief discussion, the chair called for a vote on the motion to amend. The assembly approved it by a vote of 140 yes and 35 no. Discussion on the category list continued. There was a question about the absence of the current category Politics and the Profession from the proposed list. Rosemary Feal said that the Elections Committee had substituted two more specific categories, Academic Freedom and Academic Labor. Speakers deemed those two specific categories useful but insufficient. Margaret Hanzimanolis offered a motion to amend the category list by restoring Politics and the Profession and allotting two seats to the category. This motion was seconded; the chair called for discussion. Those who spoke against the motion made two main arguments: that political issues were covered by the two categories that the Elections Committee had established as substitutes and also by many other listed categories (e.g., Race and Ethnicity in the Profession, Less Commonly Taught Language Programs) and that adding two seats was not in keeping with the committee’s efforts to control the overall size of the assembly. Those in favor of the motion saw a need for the broad category in addition to the specific categories. Since there was no further discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion to restore Politics and the Profession to the category list with two seats. The assembly approved the motion by a vote of 106 yes and 45 no.

The chair then turned to the asterisked category names and the choice between the terms *contingent* and *non-tenure-track*. There was brief discussion of the merits of each of the terms, after which the chair asked assembly members to choose between the terms using their electronic voting devices. Pressing 1 would indicate a preference for *contingent*; pressing 2 would be a vote for *non-tenure-track*. The assembly decided that the category names will include the word *contingent*, the term preferred by 77 delegates; 69 preferred *non-tenure-track*. Since there was no further discussion of the professional-issues categories, the chair called for a vote on the list of professional issues to be represented in the assembly, as amended and clarified during the preceding discussion. The assembly approved the list by a vote of 142 yes and 4 no. The approved list of professional issues, with seat allocations, reads as follows:

Category	Seats
Independent Scholars	1
Retired Scholars	1
Careers outside the Classroom	2
Full-Time Contingent Faculty Members	3
Part-Time Contingent Faculty Members	3

Scholars Residing outside the US and Canada	2
Disability in the Profession	2
Race and Ethnicity in the Profession	3
LGBTQ in the Profession	3
Women and Gender in the Profession	3
Continuing Education	1
Distance and Online Education	1
Composition, Rhetoric, and Writing Programs	3
Creative Writing Programs	2
Language Programs	3
Less Commonly Taught Language Programs	2
Community Colleges	6
Graduate Students	6
Academic Freedom	2
Academic Labor	2
Politics and the Profession	2
Publishing Issues in the Profession	2
Libraries and Archives	2

5. The assembly received a report from the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution that consisted in the six amendments to the constitution published at the MLA Web site in September 2015. The amendments grew out of four recommendations from the Elections Committee that the 2015 Delegate Assembly approved (see May 2015 *PMLA* 876–80). The first recommendation led to the formulation of the following amendment (language subject to change struck and new language shown in boldface):

- Amendment 1** (to article 10, Delegate Assembly—Composition and Election)
- A. The assembly shall represent the following:
1. *Areas of study.* One delegate shall be elected by the ~~executive committee~~ **membership** of each officially constituted forum.

The second and third recommendations resulted in the formulation of the following three amendments (language subject to change struck and new language shown in boldface):

- Amendment 2** (to article 10, Delegate Assembly—Composition and Election)
- A. The assembly shall represent the following:
2. *Electoral regions.* ~~A total of 108 delegates shall be elected from~~ **Each of** seven geographic regions within the United States and Canada **shall be represented by an equal number of delegates, the number to be determined by the Delegate Assembly.** Each of these regions shall represent approximately one-seventh of the total membership of the association residing in the United States and Canada, ~~with the number of delegates from each region proportional to that region's membership as a percentage of the total membership of the association.~~ Members may vote in all contests in any one region.
- Amendment 3** (to article 10, Delegate Assembly—Composition and Election)
- A. The assembly shall represent the following:

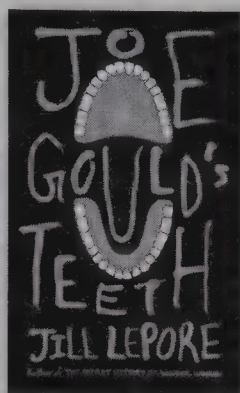
3. *Students.* ~~The number of graduate students elected from each region shall be as nearly as possible in proportion to the student membership in the region, but each~~ **Each** region shall elect at least one student member.

- Amendment 4** (to article 10, Delegate Assembly—Composition and Election)
- D. All elections for the assembly shall be supervised by the Elections Committee, which shall strive to secure a fair distribution of delegates among various constituencies of the association. On a regular basis, but at least every three years, the Elections Committee shall examine the allocations within the various categories of membership in the Delegate Assembly and propose necessary changes to the assembly. The Elections Committee shall have the following responsibilities:
1. Apportionment of the membership of the United States and Canada into seven approximately equal electoral regions, ~~apportionment of delegates among the seven regions, and apportionment between student and regular members within each region.~~ These ~~apportionments.~~ **This apportionment** shall be reexamined every three years.

The fourth recommendation necessitated the following two amendments (language subject to change struck and new language shown in boldface):

- Amendment 5** (to article 10, Delegate Assembly—Composition and Election)
- A. The assembly shall represent the following:
4. ~~*Special interests*~~ ***Professional issues.*** To secure representation responsive to ~~various other constituencies in the professional concerns of the members of the association, as many as fifty-five but no fewer than thirty-nine special interest delegates~~ **professional-issues delegates** shall be elected. **Their number and the concerns to be addressed shall be determined by the Delegate Assembly.** Candidates shall be elected by a plurality vote of the entire membership of the association.
- Amendment 6** (to article 10, Delegate Assembly—Composition and Election)
- D. All elections for the assembly shall be supervised by the Elections Committee, which shall strive to secure a fair distribution of delegates among various constituencies of the association. On a regular basis, but at least every three years, the Elections Committee shall examine the allocations within the various categories of membership in the Delegate Assembly and propose necessary changes to the assembly. The Elections Committee shall have the following responsibilities:
3. Determination of constituencies to be represented by ~~special interest~~ **professional-issues** delegates.
4. Nomination of ~~special interest~~ **professional-issues** delegates, with at least two names for each contest.
- E. Any member of the association may initiate a petition proposing an additional candidate for regional and

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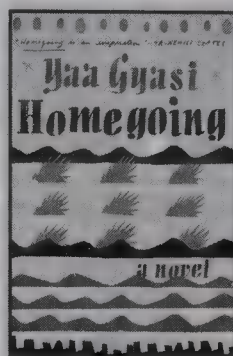
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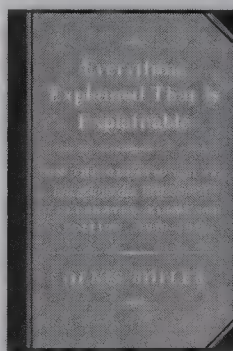
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~~special-interest~~ **professional-issues** contests. The petition must include the written consent of the candidate, the signatures of at least twenty-five members of the association, and specification of the contest involved. The Elections Committee shall have final authority for assigning candidates to particular contests. A notice of the right to petition, together with the deadline therefore, shall be printed in an appropriate publication of the association along with the announcement of the candidates selected by the Elections Committee.

The chair recognized Susan Solomon of the DAOC, who, on behalf of the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution, moved that the assembly adopt the amendments presented in the report. Only five votes would be needed, since the fifth amendment entailed the sixth. The chair opened the floor for discussion of amendment 1. Since there was no discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 131 yes and 3 no. The chair opened the floor for discussion of amendment 2. There was no discussion; the assembly approved the amendment by a vote of 130 yes and 7 no. Amendments 3 and 4 came to the floor for discussion in succession. There was no discussion of either amendment, and the assembly voted to approve both. The vote on amendment 3 was 125 yes and 11 no; the vote on amendment 4 was 138 yes and 5 no. The chair called for discussion of amendments 5 and 6. After responding to a request for clarification, the chair called for a vote on the amendments. The assembly approved amendments 5 and 6 by a vote of 142 yes and 2 no. The chair noted that, in accordance with the procedure outlined in the constitution, the amendments would be forwarded to the Executive Council for action.

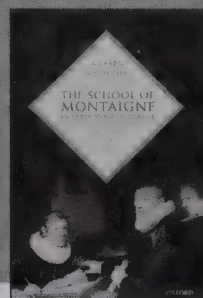
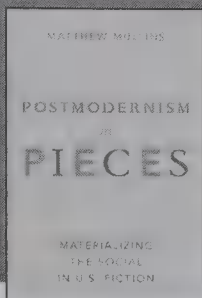
6. The assembly received a recommendation from the Executive Council for a change in the criteria for granting life membership, which are included in the dues structure of the association (see art. 3.C of the MLA constitution). In the current dues structure for life members, in place since at least 1974, life membership is granted to members of more than twenty years' standing who have retired from teaching and to all members who have paid membership dues for forty years. The council noted that the percentage of life members in the membership had more than doubled between 1977 and 2015, increasing from 6% of the membership to 16.7%, and that changes in the profession over the years since the current criteria for granting life membership were set, including the abolition of mandatory retirement, have led members to continue to teach and work actively in the profession well past the age of 65. The council therefore proposed changing the current eligibility criteria, such that life membership will be granted to members of more than thirty years' standing who have retired from teaching and to all members who have paid membership dues for fifty years. The chair recognized Gaurav Desai, who presented the recommendation to the assembly and proposed a motion that the

assembly approve it. The chair opened the floor for discussion of the motion. Discussion touched on the cost of paid life membership, the amount of revenue that the proposed changes were expected to generate, the possible negative reactions of the long-term members who would be directly affected by the changes, and the perceived unfairness of exempting members with higher incomes from the payment of dues. There was also a suggestion that the granting of life membership be limited to retirees and that another way be found to honor long-term members who have not retired. At the conclusion of the discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion calling for approval of the council's recommendation. The assembly recorded its approval by a vote of 103 yes and 34 no.

7. The assembly held an open discussion of the following topic: The Tenured and the Precariat. To organize the discussion, the DAOC also proposed two subtopics: Governance under Siege and The MLA and Professional Identity. Delegates had received background information for the discussion before the assembly meeting. The chair asked Second Vice President Diana Taylor to preside over the open discussion. Taylor reminded all present that one hour had been set aside for the open discussion. She also reminded those in attendance of the rules that would govern the open discussion. The chair then recognized in turn three members of the DAOC for introductions to the topic and subtopics. In her overview of the discussion topic, Stephanie Kirk gave the reasons for the DAOC's selection of the topic, including the expansion of precariat labor, the erosion of tenure in Wisconsin and elsewhere, the undermining of shared governance in recent years, the corporatization of universities, and the selection of business executives as university leaders. The DAOC hoped the discussion would lead to an exchange of information and the finding of common ground that would allow members to take action in their institutions and help the MLA identify relevant activities. Julie Rak said the first subtopic addressed the question of the erosion of faculty participation in university governance and whether universities and colleges that are not controlled by academics will be able to maintain their core missions. She called for discussion of ways to push back against a model of governance that does not place students and professors at the center. Vicky Unruh said the second subtopic prompted the following questions: Is there a professional identity that connects us? If so, what does that identity look like and how might it shape the future work of the MLA on the issue of university governance?

Several speakers, citing events on their campuses, gave examples of the exclusion of faculty members' input on administrative decisions affecting students and classroom matters. Other speakers pointed to outside influences (e.g., big donors, foundations, organizations like the American Council of Trustees and Alumni and the American Legislative Exchange Council) that work against faculty control and create negative public perceptions of

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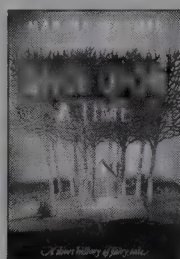
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SIMON WINCHESTER



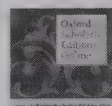
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the role that faculty members play in universities. A concerted campaign was needed to change public opinion and generate public support for the professional values that faculty members would bring to bear on matters of university governance. One speaker said the MLA should work with other organizations (e.g., Campaign for the Future of Higher Education) on this outreach effort. Another suggested that the MLA publish a statement outlining the issues. Since having information about what was happening on campuses would help faculty members identify countermeasures to pursue, it was also suggested that the MLA collect and disseminate this information.

It was noted that the casualization of labor was perhaps the most important factor underlying the erosion of faculty governance. To strengthen faculty governance, it was necessary for tenured and tenure-track faculty members to support the inclusion of non-tenure-track faculty members in departmental and institutional governance structures. One speaker said her own institution could serve as a model for such inclusion. Other speakers noted that faculty unions had an important role to play in this regard and should be encouraged to turn their attention to the mechanisms of shared governance. Also discussed was the role of departments, where the tenured and the precariat coexist. It was suggested that the MLA develop a code of departmental conduct for the treatment and inclusion of contingent faculty members, that the topic of faculty governance be included in graduate training, and that the MLA offer a departmental leadership workshop that can address how to handle interactions with upper administrators.

Discussion also touched on the defunding of higher education in general and the humanities in particular. Speakers suggested countering this trend by making the argument for higher education as a public good and by calling for a student- and faculty-centered university, not a corporatized university with a top-down, top-heavy administrative structure. It was also suggested that the MLA collaborate with other disciplinary organizations and that departments get beyond disciplinary competition for resources and find and pursue their shared interest in reasserting the value of higher education. One speaker noted that defunding and the disregard of the humanities also affected lower levels of the education system and encouraged wider attention to the problem. In response to a question, Rosemary Feal commented on the MLA's work on these issues, including the Action for Allies campaign and lobbying efforts through the National Humanities Alliance. She encouraged the DAOC to pursue the discussion, perhaps by establishing an assembly subcommittee. Kirk proposed using *MLA Commons* for this purpose and encouraged delegates to join the *Commons*.

The open discussion came to a close after fifty-one minutes, at which point First Vice President Kwame Anthony Appiah returned to the chair.

8. In the category of new business was one emergency resolution—so designated because it was received

after the 1 October deadline for submission of regular resolutions. It had been submitted to the DAOC during the Open Hearing on Resolutions the previous day. The text of the emergency resolution and supporting materials provided by the proposer were distributed to delegates immediately before the assembly meeting. The resolution, designated Emergency Resolution 2016-1, was submitted by Barbara Foley on behalf of the Radical Caucus in English and the Modern Languages and read as follows:

Whereas racialized hatred and violence toward Muslims and perceived Muslims have increased since the Paris and San Bernardino killings;

Whereas global contestation over resources has resulted in US military operations directed at Muslim-majority countries;

Whereas the rise in Islamophobia and the rhetoric of “radicalization” and the “war on terror” are being deployed to justify US foreign policy, reinforce the surveillance state, and target Muslim students, professors, and BDS activists;

Be it resolved that the MLA support faculty who challenge Islamophobic rhetoric and the increased militarism, xenophobia, and racism associated with the upsurge in Islamophobia.

The chair reminded the assembly that it could consider an emergency resolution only if three-fourths of the members agreed to consider it. Since the question of consideration involved a procedural motion that was not debatable, the chair called for an immediate vote on the question. The assembly's vote, 101 yes and 5 no, was sufficient to allow the assembly to discuss and take action on the resolution. The chair explained the two-stage process of consideration for a resolution with a preamble: he would call first for debate on and amendment of the *resolved* clause and then for debate on and amendment of the preamble before putting the full text of the resolution to a vote. He also reviewed the time limits that governed the discussion and said that he would remind the assembly at an appropriate point during the discussion of the need to turn its attention to the resolution's preamble. The chair recognized Stephanie Kirk, chair of the DAOC, to introduce the resolution. After introducing the resolution on the floor of the assembly, Kirk presented the DAOC's recommendation against its adoption by the assembly. She referred the assembly to the statement on Islamophobia that the Executive Council had adopted in December 2015, which was projected on the screen in the meeting room. Kirk said that the council's statement offered a strong condemnation of xenophobia, particularly as it pertains to the censorship and harassment of teachers and scholars of Islam. If, however, the assembly wished to adopt the resolution, the DAOC proposed to strike the words “and BDS activists” from the third *whereas* clause, since the reference to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign conflicted with the special rule adopted by the 2015 Delegate Assembly: “The

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*Reader in History and
Fellow of St. Antony's
College, University of Oxford*
"Humanity"

Michael Puett

*Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese
History, Department of Eastern
Languages and Civilizations; Chair
of the Committee on the Study of
Religion, Harvard University*
"Rethinking Religion: Cosmopolitan and
Comparative Perspectives"

Carolyn Rouse

*Professor and Chair of Anthropology
and Director of the Program in
African Studies,
Princeton University*
"The Case Against Reparations: A
Radical Rethinking of Social Justice in the
21st Century"

MINI-SEMINARS

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Shoshana Felman

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Literature and French, Emory
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"Literature and Vulnerability"

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"Just and Unjust Wars"

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Cooper Union; Vincent Scully
Visiting Professor of
Architectural History,
Yale University*
"The Smooth and the Rough: Surfaces
Psychological and Architectural from
Adrian Stokes to Rem Koolhaas"

VISITING GUEST LECTURERS

Amanda Anderson

*Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and English; Director, Cogut Center for the
Humanities, Brown University; Honorary Senior Fellow, School of Criticism and Theory*
"Political Psychology: Theory and Doxa"

Jonathan Culler

*Class of 1916 Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Cornell University;
Honorary Senior Fellow, School of Criticism and Theory*
"Narratology and the Lyric"

Frances Ferguson

*Ann L. and Lawrence B. Buttenweiser Professor and Chair, Department of English,
University of Chicago*
"Molding Populations: Deep Education"

Mariët Westermann

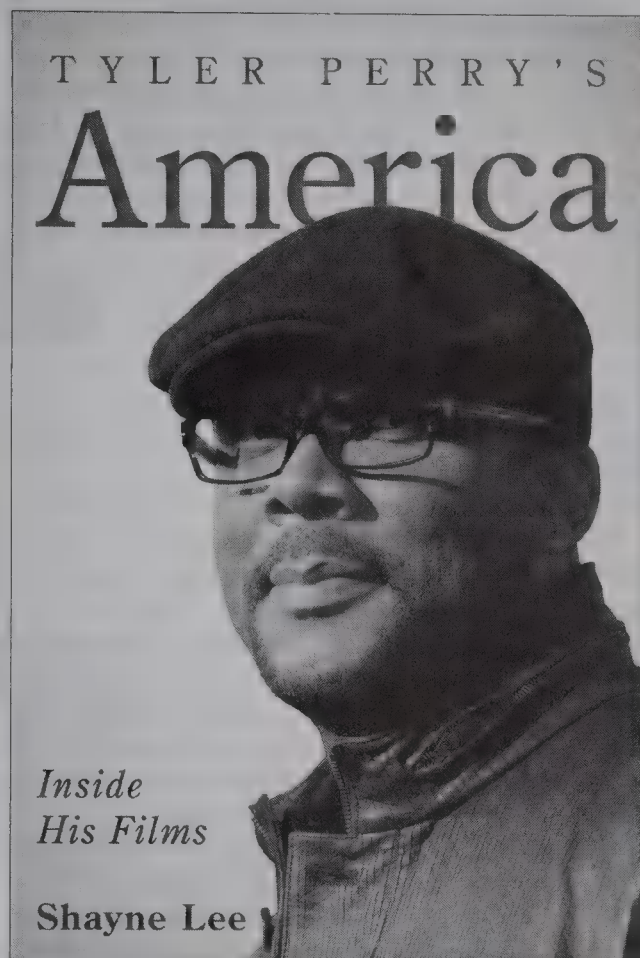
Executive Vice President for Programs and Research, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
"The Humanities in the World"

Delegate Assembly will not consider motions or resolutions on academic or institutional boycotts of Israel or on matters related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until the January 2017 meeting” (May 2015 *PMLA* 872). Taking the DAOC’s recommendation into account, the chair again reviewed the process of consideration that would be followed. The DAOC’s amendment would be processed first. Consideration of the *resolved* clause would follow; the proposer of record would be given the opportunity to speak first. After half of the time allotted for discussion of the resolution had elapsed, the chair would remind the assembly of the need to consider the preamble; once again, the proposer of record would have the opportunity to speak first. When discussion came to an end, he would ask the assembly to vote on the full text of the resolution.

The chair opened the floor for discussion of the DAOC’s proposed amendment. In response to a question, Julie Rak explained that the special rule was prompted by the agreement reached before the 2015 assembly meeting with the proposers of two conflicting resolutions that dealt with the boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Under the agreement, the resolutions were withdrawn in favor of a two-year process of discussion on *MLA Commons* and at the 2016 and 2017 conventions of the issues surrounding the boycott. The original or revised resolutions on the subject could be resubmitted for consideration at the 2017 assembly meeting. The special rule ensured that the two-year process could run its course. The DAOC judged that the BDS reference violated the special rule and would nullify the agreement, an outcome that the proposed amendment aimed to avoid. The chair raised an additional parliamentary issue: if the amendment failed, a motion to rescind the special rule would be needed, and rescinding the special rule would effectively undo the agreement. Discussion of the DAOC’s amendment then continued. The main arguments against the amendment were that the BDS reference was not a violation of the special rule and that the deletion of the reference weakened the resolution’s stance on protecting free speech. It was then proposed to amend the DAOC’s amendment by substituting “anti-Islamophobic” for “BDS.” The chair asked if there were objections to making this substitution. There was an objection, and the chair consulted with the parliamentarian on how to proceed. Since consideration of the new amendment before the DAOC’s amendment would require a vote on suspending the assembly’s rules, the chair asked the assembly to continue with discussion of and a vote on the DAOC’s amendment before taking up the second amendment. Discussion of the DAOC’s amendment therefore continued. The two main arguments against the amendment were reiterated and a third argument added: that retaining the reference to BDS activists, who are particular targets of Islamophobes, would preserve the historical specificity of the resolution. The main arguments in favor of the amendment were the need to avoid any possible violation of the special rule and to broaden the

language of the resolution to include all those who oppose Islamophobia, not just BDS activists. After clarifications were requested and provided about the documentation submitted with the resolution and about the DAOC’s decision to bring the resolution to the floor despite the concern that it violated the special rule, the chair announced that time for discussion of the amendment had expired. Since two speakers were waiting at the microphones, the chair asked if there were objections to extending the discussion for two minutes to allow them to speak. There were no objections, so the chair recognized the two speakers in turn. One asked about the vote required for membership ratification of a resolution; the other called for adoption of the DAOC’s amendment in the interest of preserving the agreement allowing for broad discussion of the issues surrounding the boycott of Israeli academic institutions. At the conclusion of the discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the DAOC’s amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 89 yes and 24 no.

The chair opened the floor for discussion of the *resolved* clause and recognized Foley, the proposer of record. Instead of addressing the *resolved* clause, Foley suggested that the assembly consider the alternative amendment to the third *whereas* clause that had been suggested during the previous discussion. Responding to a request from the chair, Donald Hall and Lakey Lakey proposed a motion to amend the amended version of the third *whereas* clause by adding the words “and anti-Islamophobia activists” at the end. This motion was seconded and occasioned no discussion. The assembly approved the motion by a vote of 105 yes and 5 no. The chair called for discussion of the resolution’s *resolved* clause and again recognized Foley. She said that the resolution was supported by four MLA forums—CLCS Global Arab and Arab American, LLC Arabic, LLC South Asian and South Asian Diasporic, and LLC West Asian—and that it qualified as an emergency resolution because of events that took place after 1 October, specifically the Paris and San Bernardino attacks. She explained that the resolution was not redundant with the council’s statement because a resolution, with its membership vote, places the MLA on record in a way that a council statement cannot. Finally, Foley argued that the resolution introduces a broader critique of what is involved in Islamophobia, a critique that finds a causal relation between United States foreign policy, including the militarism associated with resource wars, and the rise in Islamophobia. The chair asked for further discussion. Svetlana Tyutina made a motion to amend the *resolved* clause by adding the words “and students” after the word “faculty.” This motion was seconded. The chair called for discussion of the motion to amend; no one came forward. The chair asked if there were objections to adopting the amendment. There were no objections, so the chair declared the amendment adopted by unanimous consent and called for further discussion. Jonathan Skolnik proposed a motion to amend the *resolved* clause by



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striking the words “increased militarism.” This motion was seconded, and the chair called for discussion of the proposed amendment. Skolnik explained that the words in question presumed as fact something that was an opinion and introduced an ideological element that would occasion objections to a resolution that was otherwise unobjectionable. Speakers who supported the amendment said that the reference to militarism brought in a political or foreign policy issue that is not the business of the MLA and detracted from the resolution’s main purpose of offering a condemnation of Islamophobia. Those who opposed the amendment made several arguments: the reference to militarism was based on facts supported by the documentation submitted with the resolution, was consistent with the preamble, was an integral part of the broader context that distinguished the resolution from the council statement, and was in keeping with the view that Islamophobia and the war footing of the United States were mutually dependent. David Lloyd made a motion to close debate. The chair asked if there were objections to closing debate; there were none. The proposed amendment to the *resolved* clause therefore came to an immediate vote. The assembly rejected it by a vote of 41 yes and 60 no.

Since about half of the time for discussion of the resolution had elapsed, the chair reminded the assembly of the need to discuss the preamble. After determining that there was no further discussion of the *resolved* clause, the chair called for discussion of the preamble and recognized Foley, who had the right to speak first. Instead of commenting, Foley offered to respond to requests for clarification. Since no one came forward to discuss the preamble, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amended resolution. The assembly approved it by a vote of 69 yes and 32 no. The text of the resolution approved by the assembly reads as follows:

Whereas racialized hatred and violence toward Muslims and perceived Muslims have increased since the Paris and San Bernardino killings;

Whereas global contestation over resources has resulted in US military operations directed at Muslim-majority countries;

Whereas the rise in Islamophobia and the rhetoric of “radicalization” and the “war on terror” are being deployed to justify US foreign policy, reinforce the surveillance state, and target Muslim students, professors, and anti-Islamophobia activists;

Be it resolved that the MLA support faculty and students who challenge Islamophobic rhetoric and the increased militarism, xenophobia, and racism associated with the upsurge in Islamophobia.

9. The chair called on Stephanie Kirk, chair of the DAOC, to present the DAOC’s annual report. Kirk talked briefly about the committee’s work on establishing the assembly’s agenda and planning the open discussion. She encouraged delegates to suggest topics for future discus-

sions. She commented on the valuable experience gained through the previous year’s experiment with assembly subcommittees that were organized to foster collaboration with the Executive Council on several association issues. The DAOC would consider continuing the experiment with a different subcommittee model. Finally, Kirk reviewed the elements of the agreement that the DAOC had reached with the members who had proposed resolutions in October 2014 on the question of the boycott of Israeli academic institutions (see May 2015 *PMLA* 872) and called attention to the town hall meeting that the DAOC was organizing for the January 2017 convention. The chair asked if there were questions or comments on the report; no one came forward.

10. The assembly received the report of the executive director, the Finance Committee report, and annual reports from the following association committees: *PMLA* Editorial Board, Publications Committee, Committee on Scholarly Editions, Committee on the New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*, Committee on Honors and Awards, Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada, Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Committee on Information Technology, Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession, Committee on Community Colleges, Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession, and Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession. The chair recognized Executive Director Rosemary Feal to present the first report. In the interest of time and with the chair’s permission, Feal presented the first two reports. She called attention to the information in the second report on the projected budget deficits for the 2014–15 and 2015–16 fiscal years. She then invited questions about the reports. Stephen Powell expressed concern about the travel costs associated with recent convention sites. Feal said that the Executive Council and the staff shared the concern. She noted that travel to the next two conventions, in Philadelphia and New York City, would be relatively easy for many members on the East Coast but that more needed to be done to reduce the cost of convention attendance. Increases in airfares were a given, but the staff was working to provide lower-cost options for housing. Johanna Schuster-Craig asked about the connection between the convention and the job market. Feal noted that the convention is above all a scholarly and professional conference and that the increasing availability and use of teleconference interviews was separating the job market from the convention. The council and the staff were working on making the convention a more attractive venue for all, through, for example, the scheduling of professional development workshops for members at different career stages. Thomas Russell Smith asked if the MLA had guidelines for *Skype* interviews. Feal responded in the affirmative and also called attention to general guidelines on the

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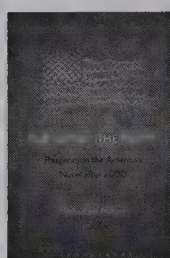
Derek Parker Royal, University of Texas at Dallas, USA

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Subject of the Event **Reagency in the American Novel after 2000**

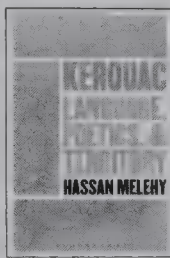
Sebastian Huber, Fresenius University, Germany

Subject of the Event analyzes five critically acclaimed novels of the new millennium—Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006), Jess Walter's *The Zero* (2006), Mark Z. Danielewski's

Only Revolutions (2006), Paul Beatty's *Slumberland* (2008) and Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day* (2006)—and argues that they create different "subjects of the event" that are empowered with "reagency." The "subject of the event" and its empowerment, what this book calls "reagency," implies that subjects only evolve out of their confrontation with the revolutionary impetus that events propel.

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Kerouac

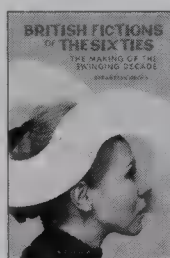
Language, Poetics, and Territory
Hassan Melehy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA

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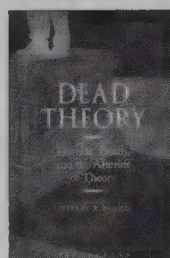
British Fictions of the Sixties **The Making of the Swinging Decade** *Sebastian Groes, University of Roehampton, UK*

British Fictions of the Sixties focuses on the major socio-political changes that marked the sixties in relationship to the development of literature over the decade. This book is the first critical study to acknowledge that the

1960s can only be understood if, next to its contemporary socio-political history, its fictions and mythologies are acknowledged as a vital constituent in the understanding of the decade. Groes uncovers a major epistemological shift, and presents a powerful meta-narrative about post-war literature in the UK, and beyond.

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job search from the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities. The chair asked if there were further questions on the reports; no one came forward. The chair then recognized Susan Solomon, of the DAOC, to present the reports from the association's committees. Solomon encouraged delegates to read the reports and thanked committee members for the valuable work they had done during the past year. The chair asked if there were questions or comments; there were none.

11. The chair called for the announcement of other items of new business, noting that new proposals could be discussed but could not be voted on until the next assembly meeting. No one came forward.

12. The chair called for announcements; there were none.

13. The chair declared the 2016 meeting of the Delegate Assembly adjourned sine die at 5:25 p.m.

Delegates in attendance:

Forum Delegates: Mary-Grace Albanese, Fabian R. Alfie, David Alworth, Elizabeth Anker, Mary McAleer Balkun, John C. Brereton, Kristina Bross, James J. Brown, Jr., Zahid R. Chaudhary, Katie Chenoweth, T. Craig Christy, Deborah L. Clarke, Albrecht Classen, Ann Baynes Coiro, Rhonda Collier, Mary Jean Corbett, Siobhan S. Craig, Corry Cropper, Lorenzo Fabbri, Cristina Ferreira-Pinto Bailey, Andrew Franta, Catherine Fung, Charles Victor Ganelin, Deniz Gökürk, Nathan Gorelick, Jessica Greenfield, Laura Heffernan, Omaar Hena, Patrick Colm Hogan, Benjamin Kahan, Stephen P. Knadler, Thomas Koenigs, Bonnie Lenore Kyburz, Jessie M. Labov, Cassandra Laity, Joshua K. Lund, Susan H. Lurie, Ellen MacKay, John Marx, Anna H. More, Alberto Moreiras, John W. Mowitt, Laura Murphy, Christopher John Newfield, Daniel E. O'Sullivan, Yolanda Padilla, Thomas Augustine Prendergast, Ato Quayson, Kristin C. Ross, Seth Rudy, Jeffrey Sacks, Eve Salisbury, Jonathan S. Skolnik, John H. Smith, Thomas Russell Smith, Joanna Stalnaker, Lisa Surwillo, Jane F. Thraillkill, Elaine Treharne, Gabriel Trop, Priya Wadhera, Ariel Watson, Johanna Watzinger-Tharp, Ellen Welch, Sebastian Wogenstein.

Special-Interest Delegates: Tahia Abdel Nasser, Karyn Marie Ball, Sukanya Banerjee, Olivia Banner, Ginny Carney, Frank Cha, David Clemens, Basuli Deb, Héctor Dominguez, Sébastien Dubreil, Leigh Gilmore, Richard Hardack, Salah D. Hassan, H. Edward Higginbotham, Dolan Hubbard,

Maryse Jayasuriya, Jeongoh Kim, Rachael King, Elizabeth Mathews Losh, Paul Manfredi, Brandon Manning, Suzanne Matson, Charlotte Pressler, Janice A. Radway, Ignacio F. Rodeño Iturriaga, Channette Romero, Stephen Sheehi, Karen Shimakawa, Steven Shoemaker, Rebecca Jane Stanton, Rebecca F. Stern, Joyce Lynn Tolliver, Susan Weeber, Timothy F. Weiss, Patrick Williams, Hertha D. Sweet Wong, Veli N. Yashin, Elizabeth Marie Zanichowsky.

Regional Delegates: Carlos Abreu Mendoza, Chiji Akoma, Eveline Bailey, Danielle Barkley, Katia C. Bezerra, Mariana Bolivar Rubin, Michelle Jeannette Brazier, Stephen Matthew Brockmann, Heather Brown, Sarah E. Chinn, Olivia Jones Choplin, Shalyn Claggett, Adam Coon, Ana Corbalian, Juan E. De Castro, Stacey Lee Donohue, Erica Edwards, Jonathan Elmer, Christopher Eng, Maria Faini, Gregory Foran, Marc Fortin, Benjamin Friedlander, Patrick L. Gallagher, Jürgen E. Grandt, Jenelle Grant, Nathan Grant, Karen Elizabeth Gross, Brian Gutierrez, Emily A. Haddad, Margaret Hanzimanolis, Caroline Kyungah Hong, Katie Kane, Lakey Lakey, Corey Lamont, Donald F. Larsson, James Kyung-Jin Lee, Diana Leong, Jill LeRoy-Frazier, Anna Lillios, David C. Lloyd, Christopher M. Lupke, Juliet Lynd, Kyle McAuley, John McGowan, Salvador Mercado, Feisal G. Mohamed, Alex Mueller, Nasser Mufti, Amy Mulligan, Jonathan Naito, Lisa Nalbone, Cheryl Narumi Naruse, Patrick R. O'Malley, Frank A. Palmeri, Roy Pérez, Stephen David Powell, Mark A. Reid, Natalia Ruiz-Rubio, Willis A. Salomon, Rebecca Sanchez, Rosaura Sanchez, Johanna E. Schuster-Craig, Tristan Schweiger, Cynthia L. Selfe, Jordan Stone, Erin Sweeney, Christopher J. Taylor, Svetlana Tyutina, Luiz Fernando Valente, Lauren Vedal, Judson D. Watson III, Lily Wong.

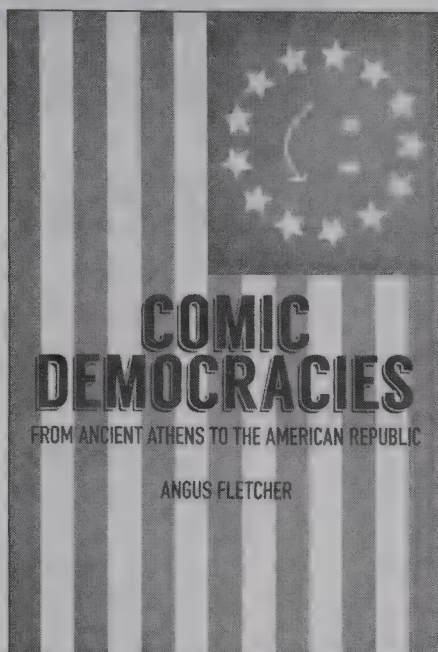
Delegates Representing Regional MLAs: Ezra Cappell, Jason M. Houston, Kristin A. Le Veness, Elizabeth J. West.

Officers and Members of the Executive Council: Samer M. Ali, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Emily Apter, Brian Croxall, Gaurav G. Desai, Donald E. Hall, Margaret R. Higonnet, Lutz Koepnick, Paula M. Krebs, David Palumbo-Liu, Elizabeth Schwartz Crane, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, Diana Taylor, Vicky Unruh.

Members of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee: Stephanie Louise Kirk, Margaret A. Noodin, Julie Rak, Susan Solomon.

Parliamentarian: Jeanette N. Williams.

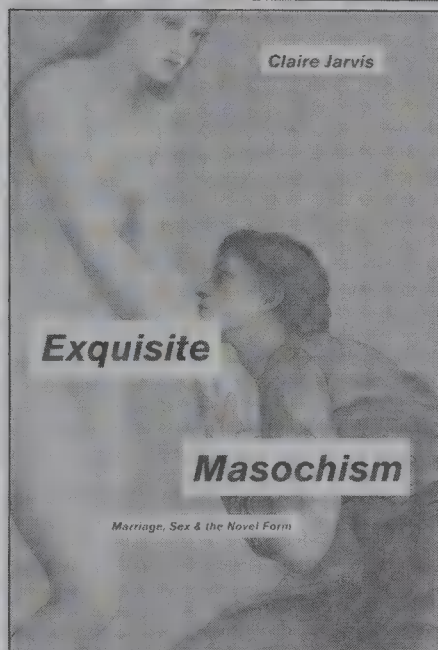
Clerk: Rosemary G. Feal.



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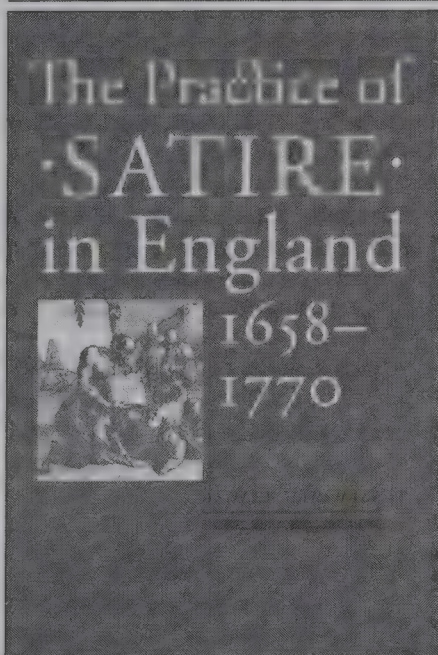
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Minutes of the MLA Executive Council

[*Note: The Executive Council voted to approve these minutes at its February 2016 meeting.*]

THE COUNCIL MET ON 30–31 OCTOBER 2015 AT THE MLA OFFICE IN NEW YORK. PRESIDENT Roland Greene presided. The officers present were First Vice President Kwame Anthony Appiah, Second Vice President Diana Taylor, and Executive Director Rosemary G. Feal. The Executive Council members present were Samer M. Ali, Emily Apter, Brian Croxall, Gaurav G. Desai, Donald E. Hall, Margaret R. Higonnet, Lanisa Kitchiner, Lutz Koepnick, Paula M. Krebs, David Palumbo-Liu, Elizabeth Schwartz Crane, Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, and Vicky Unruh. The MLA staff members present were Director of Administration and Finance Terrence Callaghan, Director of Bibliographic Information Services and Editor of the *MLA International Bibliography* Barbara Chen (30 Oct. only), Associate Executive Director and Director of Scholarly Communication Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Director of Information Systems Micki Kaufman, Director of Research and ADE David Laurence, Director of Programs and ADFL Dennis Looney, Director of Outreach Siovahn Walker, and Assistant to the Executive Director and Coordinator of Governance Carol Zuses. Controller Arlene Barnard was present for discussions of the MLA budget (see item 1, below).

In the morning on 30 October, the council began by meeting with the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee (DAOC), which had convened on 28–29 October to review assembly and other association business. Stephanie Louise Kirk, the chair of the DAOC, reported to the council on the activities of the four Delegate Assembly (DA) subcommittees that the DAOC had established the previous year as a model for conducting assembly business through the year (see May 2015 *PMLA* 872). The DAOC members who chaired the subcommittees explained the work that had been carried out on *MLA Commons* and noted ways in which the subcommittee model might be modified in the future. Kirk also reported on the implementation of the DAOC's plan that allowed the proposers of two conflicting resolutions on academic boycotts to withdraw their resolutions from consideration by the 2015 DA (see May 2015 *PMLA* 872). She said that the proposers of the two resolutions had requested DAOC moderators for the sessions in debate format that they had organized for the 2016 convention and that the committee had begun to discuss arrangements for the town hall meeting to be held before the assembly meeting at the 2017 convention. Kirk then presented the topic that the DAOC had chosen for the open-discussion portion of the assembly's agenda, The Tenured and the Precariat, and the two subtopics, Governance under Siege and The MLA and Professional Identity. She concluded the committee's report by announcing that Margaret A. Noodin had been elected chair of the DAOC for the term 11 January 2016 through

New from Cambridge

A History of New Zealand Literature

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Kelly Elizabeth Sultzbach

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Edmund Spenser in Context

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A. T. Hatto

Joyce's Dante

James Robinson

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Edited by Jennifer Putzi and Alexandra Socarides

The Elizabethan Country House Entertainment

Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich

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Eyal Amiran

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Edited by Patricia Gherovici and Manya Steinkoler

New Perspectives on Malthus

Edited by Robert J. Mayhew

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio

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The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American West

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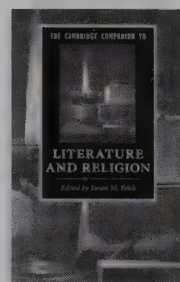
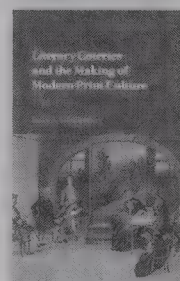
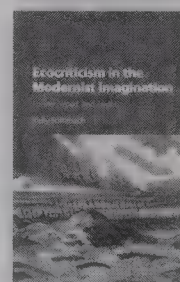
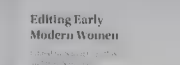
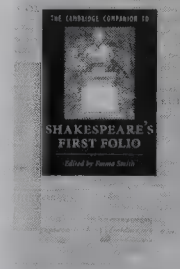
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8 January 2017. The president concluded the joint meeting of the council and the DAOC by thanking the members of the committee for their report. In addition to the DAOC chair, the members of the committee who participated in the joint meeting were Noodin and Julie Rak.

After the meeting with the DAOC, the council convened in executive session until lunch. After lunch, in regular session, the council began working through its agenda. In late afternoon, the small groups of council members that had met in May to translate the results of the membership surveys conducted by the Jenks Group into strategic-planning priorities (see Jan. 2016 *PMLA* 212) met again to continue the strategic-planning process (see item 7, below). In the morning on 31 October, the council convened first in regular session to hear the reports of the small groups' chairs and discuss next steps. After another executive session, the council reconvened in regular session before and after lunch to complete work on the action items on its agenda. The council adjourned at 2:20 p.m., having concluded all the business before it.

The council took the following actions:

1. *Administration and Finance.* The council received a report from the staff Finance Committee on the fiscal year just ended (2014–15) and on the final budget for the current fiscal year (2015–16). The committee projected that the association would conclude the 2014–15 fiscal year with a deficit of \$694,300 in the association's unrestricted and restricted funds. The costs associated with the relocation of the MLA headquarters office contributed to the deficit, as did the postponement of the release of the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook* from the summer of 2015 to the spring of 2016 and lower-than-projected revenue from the *MLA International Bibliography*. Feal explained the factors that contributed to the shortfall in bibliography revenue: institutions that joined consortia paid less for their subscriptions, the strong dollar resulted in lower income from subscriptions quoted in foreign currencies, and several large institutions renewed their subscriptions after the close of the fiscal year.

The council reviewed the final budget for the fiscal year 2015–16, which projected a deficit of \$452,510 in the unrestricted fund. The committee noted that its projections for both revenue and expenses had been lowered since May and that projections of cost recovery from external sources had been increased. The council voted to approve the final budget for the fiscal year 2015–16.

The council adopted the following resolution relating to financial management. [Note: The president certified the council's action by signing the original document containing the resolution. The document was then stamped with the association's corporate seal.]

WHEREAS, article 4, section E, of the constitution of the Modern Language Association provides as follows: "The permanent fund of the association and its other endowment funds shall be administered by a board of three trustees, each appointed by the Executive Council

for a three-year term, the three terms to be staggered by one year. One of the trustees shall be designated the managing trustee"; and

WHEREAS, Malcolm Smith, Domna Stanton, and Catharine Stimpson have been appointed by the Executive Council as the three trustees with authority to administer the permanent fund of the association and its other endowment funds, and Malcolm Smith has been designated the managing trustee of this committee (the "Permanent Fund Committee");

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, that, upon the direction to Rosemary G. Feal as executive director, Kathleen Fitzpatrick as associate executive director and director of scholarly communication, and Terrence Callaghan as director of administration and finance of any member of the Permanent Fund Committee to effect the purchase, transfer, sale, or other disposition of any security or securities held in the permanent fund or any other endowment funds, the executive director, associate executive director and director of scholarly communication, and director of administration and finance be and hereby are authorized and directed to take all such steps and to execute and deliver all such documents as they shall deem necessary or appropriate to effect such purchase, transfer, sale, or other disposition; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the president of the MLA be and hereby is authorized and directed to certify this resolution to any third party requiring delivery of same in order to substantiate the proper authority for the disposition of the securities of the permanent fund or any other endowment funds.

The council also adopted a resolution authorizing Rosemary Feal, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, and Terrence Callaghan to execute agreements and other documents that are necessary for the conduct of the association's business with Bank of America and U.S. Trust.

The council authorized the following staff members to sign nonpayroll checks: Terrence Callaghan, Barbara Chen, Rosemary Feal, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Micki Kaufman, David Laurence, Dennis Looney, and Siovahn Walker. Two signatures are required on checks in amounts over two thousand dollars. The council also authorized Terrence Callaghan, Rosemary Feal, and Kathleen Fitzpatrick to sign payroll checks.

2. *Development of a New Platform for the MLA International Bibliography.* The staff reported that the seventeen-year-old platform that the bibliography uses to create and store data is unable to support enhancements that would improve the comprehensiveness and timeliness of updates and provide seamless access to full text. The current platform also imposes limits on the automation of processes and on the internal sharing of data with the editorial and membership departments, sharing that is needed for the development of new member services, new revenue models, and increased efficiency

MARGELLOS

WORLD REPUBLIC OF LETTERS



The Roar of Morning

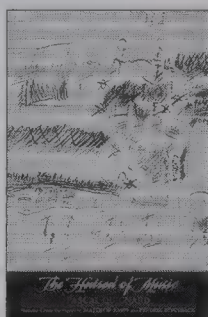
Tip Marugg

Translated by Paul Vincent
PB-with Flaps

The Walnut Mansion

Miljenko Jergovic

Translated by Stephen M. Dickey, with
Janja Pavetic-Dickey



The Last Days of Mankind

The Complete Text

Karl Kraus

Translated by Fred Bridgham and
Edward Timms

Graveyard Clay

Cré na Cille

Máirtín Ó Cadhain

Translated from the Irish by Liam Mac
Con Iomaire and Tim Robinson



The Dirty Dust

Cré na Cille

Máirtín Ó Cadhain

Translated from the Irish by Alan Titley
Paper

The Hatred of Music

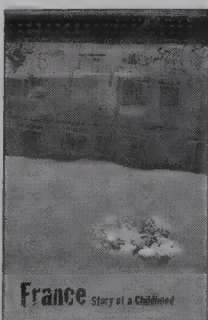
Pascal Quignard

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Matthew Amos and Fredrik Rönnebeck

Love Letter in Cuneiform

Tomáš Zmeškal

Translated from the Czech by
Alex Zucker
PB-with Flaps



Melancholy

László F. Földényi

Translated from the Hungarian
by Tim Wilkinson
Foreword by Alberto Manguel

France, Story of a Childhood

Zahia Rahmani

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Lara Vergnaud
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Orthokostá

A Novel

Thanassis Valtinos

Translated from the Greek by
Jane Assimakopoulos and
Stavros Deligiorgis
Foreword by Stathis N. Kalyvas

FORTHCOMING IN FALL 2016

Little Jewel

Patrick Modiano

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Penny Hueston
PB-with Flaps

Pedigree

A Memoir

Patrick Modiano

Translated from the French by
Mark Polizzotti
PB-with Flaps

At Twilight They Return

A Novel in Ten Tales

Zyranna Zateli

Translated from the Greek by
David Connolly



across the organization. With the help of a consultant, the staff developed a request for proposals for submission to vendors of other platforms; three proposals were received. After vetting these proposals extensively, the staff identified Innodata as the preferred vendor. The council authorized the staff to conclude an agreement with Innodata to develop and implement a new platform for the bibliography.

3. *Trustee Appointment.* The council reappointed Domna C. Stanton, distinguished professor of French at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a past president of the MLA, as a trustee of the association's invested funds for the term 2016–18.

4. *Appointment of an Editor for PMLA.* The council appointed Wai Chee Dimock (English and Amer. studies, Yale Univ.) to succeed Simon Gikandi as editor of *PMLA*. Dimock's three-year term will begin in July 2016.

5. *Approval of the May 2015 Council Minutes.* The council approved the minutes of its May 2015 meeting for publication in the January 2016 issue of *PMLA*.

6. *Confirmation of Actions Taken between Council Meetings.* The council took four actions between its May and October meetings. (1) In June, the council agreed to sign on to an American Historical Association statement responding to proposals under consideration in the Wisconsin legislature that threatened tenure and academic freedom. (2) Also in June, the council appointed Rebecca Moore Howard to the Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*. (3) In July, the council agreed to sign on to a letter that was circulated by the Association of College and Research Libraries and that encouraged President Obama to issue a strong policy to ensure that educational materials created with federal funds are made available to the public as "open educational resources." (4) At the beginning of October, the council agreed to sign on to a letter that the Coalition for International Education was preparing to send to a House committee and a House subcommittee and that included a proposal for federal funding to support data-collection projects like the MLA's surveys of enrollments in foreign language courses.

When these actions were proposed, the council's procedure for making decisions between meetings was implemented (see Oct. 2010 *PMLA* 1102), and the full council was given the opportunity to discuss the actions on its electronic discussion list. Since the council was unanimous in its approval of the proposed actions, its advisory committee did not have to act. At the present meeting, the council confirmed these decisions.

7. *Strategic Planning for Membership Initiatives.* The council received the planning document that it had requested in May (see Jan. 2016 *PMLA* 212). Based on the council's previous discussions, the staff developed specific recommendations in four areas (expanding the association's audience; the job market, career development, and the convention; advocacy; MLA publications) and assigned priority ratings (low, medium, high) to the recommen-

dations. During the small-group discussions on Friday, council members revised some of the recommendations and priority ratings. During the full council's review on Saturday, council members noted that the priority ratings needed further clarification. After the full council's review on Saturday, the council accepted the changes to the planning document put forth during the small-group meetings and asked the staff to provide additional information for the council's February 2016 meeting: an analysis of the three dimensions of the priority ratings and a list of the recommendations that would be easiest to implement, to be based on council members' rankings of the importance of the recommendations.

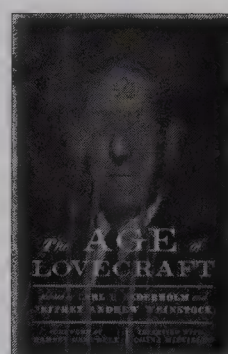
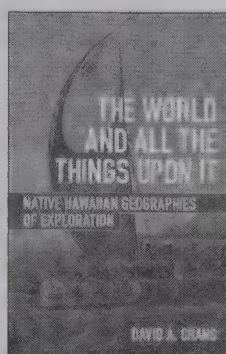
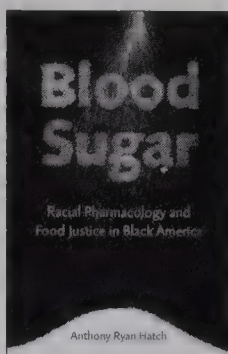
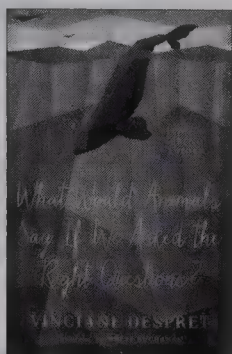
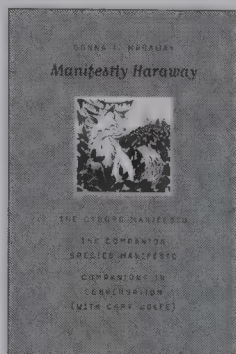
8. *Statements on Campus Carry Legislation.* The council was asked to join several other scholarly societies in signing an American Political Science Association (APSA) statement opposing state laws, including Texas's recently adopted SB11, that facilitate the carrying of handguns on college campuses. The council agreed to endorse the APSA statement but also decided to draft an MLA statement that focused on the Texas law. Two council members volunteered to draft an MLA statement and circulate it on the council's electronic discussion list for the council's consideration. [Note: A draft statement was circulated to the council in November, and the council approved it. The statement was copyedited and posted with the APSA statement on the Executive Council Actions page at the MLA Web site.]

9. *Policy on Exhibits and Advertisements.* The council approved the following policy on exhibits and advertisements:

1. The Modern Language Association of America complies with the provisions of applicable federal laws prohibiting discrimination.
2. The Modern Language Association of America will accept advertising in its publications (including but not limited to books, journals, membership and promotional material, the *Job Information List*, and the MLA's online platforms) or items for exhibition that, at its sole discretion, it deems to fall within its mission and scope. All items exhibited or advertised under the auspices of the MLA are subject to the approval of the executive director or her or his designee. The MLA reserves the right to reject advertisers, ads, applications to exhibit, and job listings for any reason at any time. Placement of advertisements in MLA publications and the location of booths in the MLA convention's exhibit hall will be at the MLA's discretion, although the purchasers' preferences will be met whenever possible.

10. *Policy on Reporting Vote Tallies to Candidates.* At its May meeting, the council considered the question of revising its 1991 policy on reporting vote tallies (see Jan. 2016 *PMLA* 214). At the present meeting, the council reviewed and approved the following revised policy:

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Weinstock, editors

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MINNESOTA

Published voting results will include the names and affiliations of the successful candidates and the level of membership participation in the voting (i.e., the number of eligible voters, the number of ballots submitted, and the percentage of voter participation). Vote tallies will not be published, but a candidate may request information about the vote tally in his or her contest. In response to such a request, the staff will refer to the first round of voting and tell the candidate where he or she placed among all candidates and how many votes separated him or her from the next highest vote getter. If the next highest vote getter was not a winning candidate, the information provided will also include the number of votes that separated the candidate from the closest winning candidate.

11. *Review of the Executive Council's Report to the 2016 Delegate Assembly.* At its February 2015 meeting, following the provisions of article 7.B.2 of the MLA constitution, the Executive Council had considered as a recommendation a motion approved by the Delegate Assembly in January 2015 (see May 2015 PMLA 888–90) and determined that it could not make decisions on the implementation of the motion, which called for increasing the representation of part-time faculty members in MLA governance roles and on MLA committees, until the meaning of *part-time* was clarified. At the present meeting, the council reviewed, revised, and approved a draft of its report to the assembly on the need for clarification of the motion.

12. *Recommendation to the Delegate Assembly on Revising the Criteria for Life Membership.* According to the current criteria for the granting of life membership, which are part of the association's dues structure, members of more than twenty years' standing who have retired from teaching and all members who have paid membership dues for forty years are eligible. The staff asked the council to consider recommending two revisions to these criteria to the Delegate Assembly, which is constitutionally responsible (see art. 9.C.5) for determining the dues structure. In making this request, the staff noted that the current criteria have been in place since at least 1974 and that the profession has changed over the years since then. Members are able to continue to teach and work actively in the profession well past the age of 65, the mandatory retirement age in the United States before 1978, because Congress changed the mandatory retirement age to 70 in 1978 and then abolished mandatory retirement altogether in 1986. The council agreed that the criteria should be revised and recommended increasing the eligibility criteria mentioned above from twenty to thirty years and from forty to fifty years. The council's recommendation will be forwarded to the 2016 Delegate Assembly.

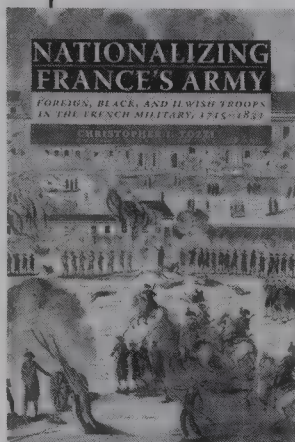
13. *Annual Reports from Standing Committees.* The council received annual reports from the editor of PMLA and from the following standing committees: Publications Committee, Committee on Scholarly Editions, Committee

on the New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, Advisory Committee on the MLA *International Bibliography*, Committee on Honors and Awards, Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada, Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Committee on Information Technology, Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession, Committee on Community Colleges, Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession (CSGSP), and Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession. The council accepted these reports with thanks. The council also asked the staff to look into the CSGSP's suggestion that the MLA's hotel-cancellation policy be made more flexible for graduate students who attend the MLA convention and to encourage committees to transmit their requests to the council at any time, not just in their annual reports.

14. *Revision to the Charge of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities (CAFPRR).* CAFPRR requested that the council approve revisions to the committee's charge that were prompted by the committee's assessment of its recent work. After making its own revisions to CAFPRR's draft, the council approved the following revised committee charge:

The Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities addresses the general conditions of MLA members' professional lives as teachers and scholars, whether in universities, colleges, or schools, or as independent scholars. The committee is concerned with the rights and responsibilities of scholars and teachers in all MLA fields, specifically the right of academic freedom and the responsibility of ethical conduct toward colleagues, students, and institutions. This includes the right and responsibility to understand and participate in institutional governance, planning, budgeting, and resource oversight. The committee monitors activities connected with the recruitment and promotion of faculty members, especially the Job Information Center at the association's annual convention, and receives comments and recommends actions to ensure fairness. In addition, the committee considers the relations among research, teaching, and professional advancement. Specific professional concerns include transparency in the funding of research and teaching, the use and abuse of adjunct instructors, and the recruitment of minorities into the profession. The committee will develop strategies for dealing with bigotry and prejudice on campus and with inappropriate invocations of academic freedom whose effect is restrictive. These concerns engage questions of philosophy, methodology, and politics in the teaching of all fields encompassed by the MLA. The committee is charged with initiating relevant projects and publications but is not empowered to hear individual grievances.

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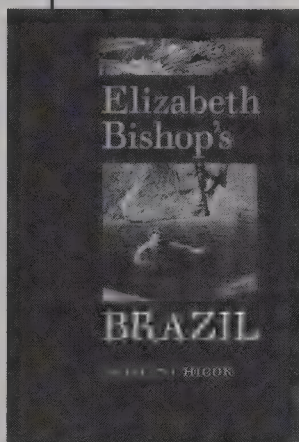
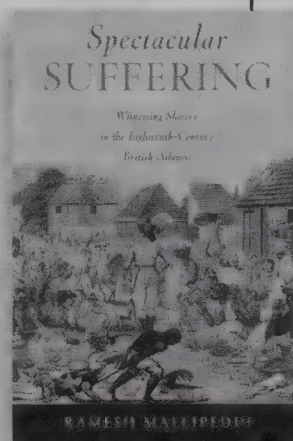
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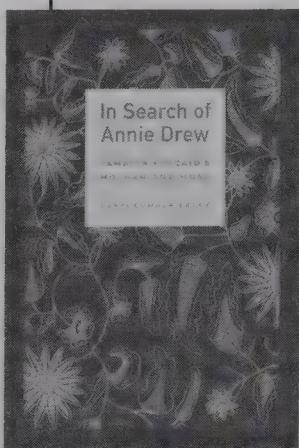
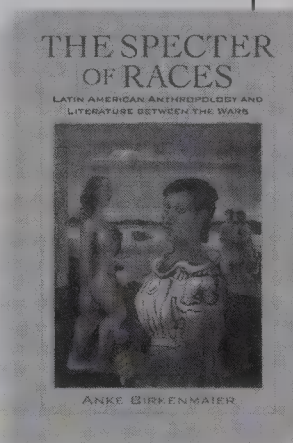
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15. *Request from the Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE).* The CSE requested that the council approve as an MLA statement its white paper, "Considering the Scholarly Edition in the Digital Age," which the CSE had published for comment on its *MLA Commons* site in September. The council approved the CSE's request and renamed the white paper the MLA Statement on the Scholarly Edition in the Digital Age.

16. *Revision of Submission Requirements for Honorary Fellow Nominations.* At its May 2015 meeting, the council decided that members who wish to recommend nominees for honorary fellowship need to provide more information about the potential nominees than is currently required (see Jan. 2016 *PMLA* 214). At the current meeting, the council reviewed and approved the following revised submission requirements:

Members who would like to recommend individuals for consideration by the Committee on Honors and Awards should write a statement of 500 to 750 words describing the proposed nominee's contributions and detailing specific qualities or features of the proposed nominee's record that distinguish it and constitute its originality. They should also compile and submit a 1- to 2-page list of the proposed nominee's works and honors or a list of up to 5 URLs where descriptions and lists of the proposed nominee's work may be found or both.

17. *Recommendations from the Program Committee.* The council received and acted on the Program Committee's recommendations regarding allied organizations and the establishment of new convention forums. The council renewed for seven years the allied organization status of fourteen societies: American Portuguese Studies Association, Association for the Study of Dada and Surrealism, Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature, Cervantes Society of America, College Language Association, Doris Lessing Society, Ernest Hemingway Foundation and Society, GEMELA Grupo de Estudios sobre la Mujer en España y las Américas (pre-1800), Graduate Student Caucus, Henry James Society, International James Joyce Foundation, Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association, Modernist Studies Association, and North American Society for the Study of Romanticism. The council renewed for three years the allied organization status of the Romanian Studies Association of America (RSAA) and authorized the Program Committee to transmit to the RSAA the committee's concerns about broadening members' participation in RSAA activities and about the relation between the RSAA and the MLA forum LLC Romanian. The council agreed to postpone for one year the review of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Pursuant to a request from the Ellen Glasgow Society, the council discontinued the society's allied status.

The council also received the Program Committee's recommendations on petitions to establish new convention forums. At the current meeting, the council approved

the establishment of four forums in the category Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: Ming and Qing Chinese, Modern and Contemporary Chinese, Japanese to 1900, and Japanese since 1900. Because of an oversight, the committee's recommendations on two additional forum petitions, for Creative Writing in the category Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies (RCWS) and History and Literature in the category Transdisciplinary Connections (TC), were not transmitted to the council until after the council meeting. The council authorized the establishment of RCWS Creative Writing and TC History and Literature by means of its electronic discussion list. The six new forums will organize their first sessions for the 2017 convention.

The Program Committee considered several questions about the current guidelines on the nomination of executive committee candidates, which provide that executive committees select one of the two candidates from a list of suggestions from the membership. This requirement has proved difficult to fulfill in recent years because the number of membership suggestions has been quite low. To alleviate the difficulties, the committee recommended that membership suggestions from the previous year be included in the current year's list of suggestions, provided that the suggestions brought forward continue to meet the MLA membership requirement. The committee also recommended an additional guideline to address the situation where an executive committee receives fewer than three membership suggestions. The council approved the committee's recommendations.

Finally, the committee took up a question about forum representatives in the Delegate Assembly. The earlier policies for divisions required that divisional delegates be members of the divisions they represented, but this requirement was not enforced. The committee recommended the establishment and enforcement of a new policy requiring forum delegates to designate the relevant forum as one of their primary affiliations. The council approved this recommendation.

18. *Committee Appointments.* The council made one committee appointment. The names of all new and continuing committee members appear at the MLA Web site.

19. *Request from the Coalition for International Education (CIE).* The council received a request to sign on to a letter that the CIE was preparing to send to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the United States Senate endorsing proposed amendments to Title I of the Higher Education Act (HEA) that would expand the definition of an "institution of higher education" to include not just institutions physically located in the United States or its territories but also American colleges and universities abroad that are fully accredited and licensed in the United States and meet all other requirements for program eligibility under the HEA. The council agreed to sign the letter.

20. *Endorsement of Guidelines for Accessible Books.* An MLA member wrote to the council on behalf of a coalition of disability studies scholars and faculty members to

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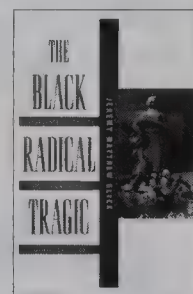
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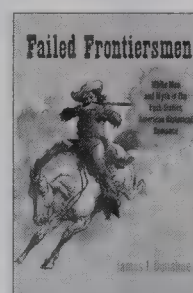
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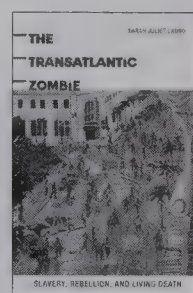
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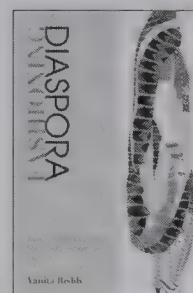
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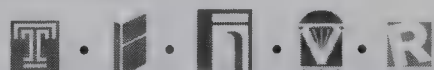
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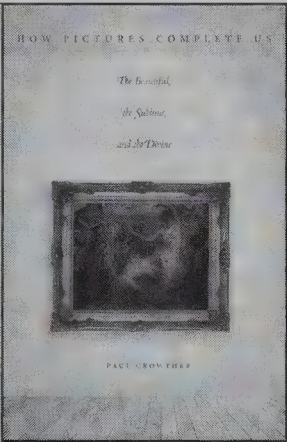


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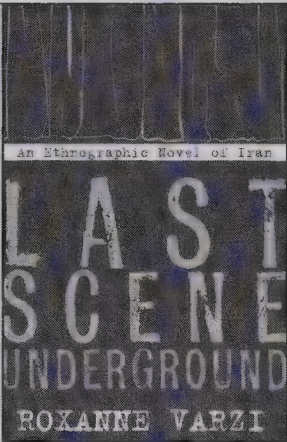
request that the council endorse a set of guidelines on accessible formats for books that the coalition had created. The guidelines take the form of a letter specifying technical requirements for accessibility that authors can send to their publishers. The council agreed to endorse the guidelines.

21. *Request from the MLA Subconference.* One of the organizers of the MLA Subconference requested that the MLA provide financial assistance to subsidize the costs of the subconference meetings in Austin. The council authorized a donation of \$1,000 to the subconference.

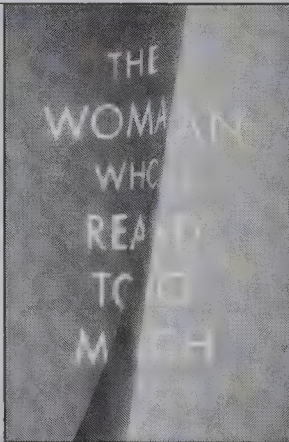
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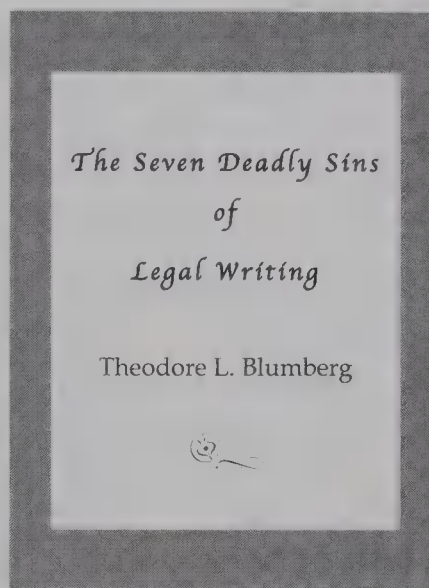
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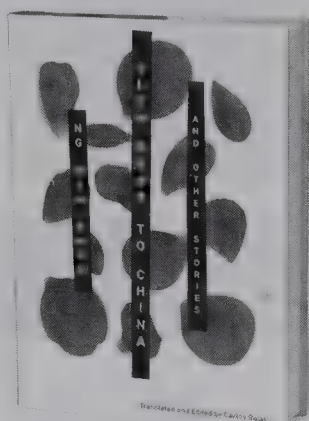
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 John Lasley Dameron, University of Memphis, 27 June 2016
 Consuela Francis, College of Charleston, 9 May 2016
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 Carol V. Kaske, Cornell University, 15 June 2016
 Terence Martin, Indiana University, Bloomington, 26 May 2016
 J. Marie McCleary, Texas Southern University, 9 September 2015
 Russ McDonald, University of London, Goldsmiths College, 1 July 2016
 E. Leo McMannus, Miami-Dade College, North Campus, FL, 18 November 2015
 Thomas Colborn Moser, Sr., Stanford University, 9 June 2016
 James Graham Nelson, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 10 April 2015
 Gregory Rabassa, Queens College and Graduate Center, City University of New York,
 13 June 2016
 William H. Shuford, Lenoir-Rhyne University, 1 August 2015
 Elie Wiesel, Boston University, 2 July 2016

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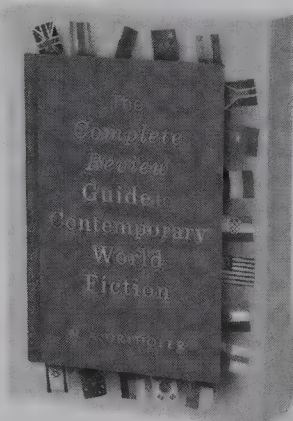
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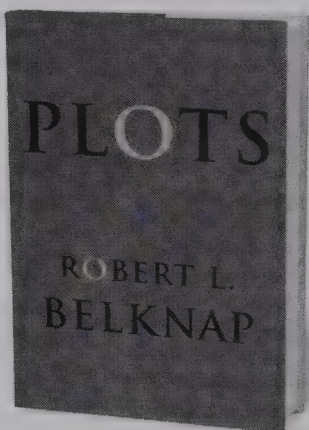
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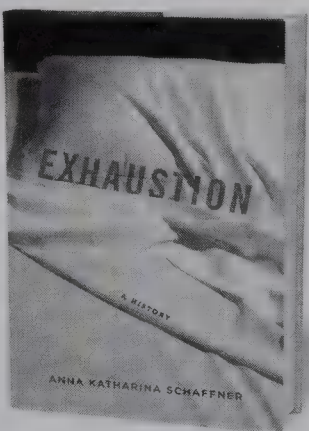
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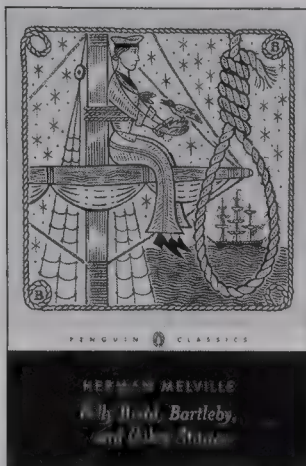


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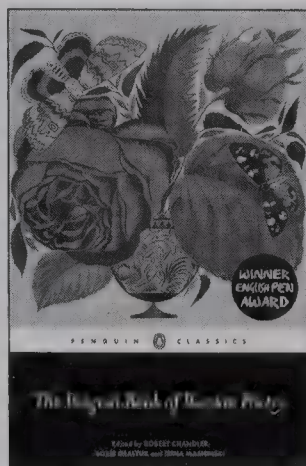
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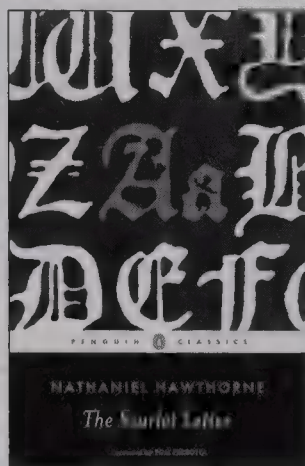
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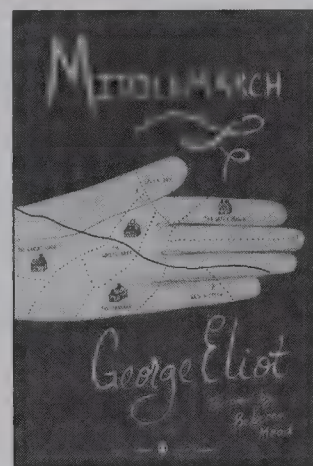
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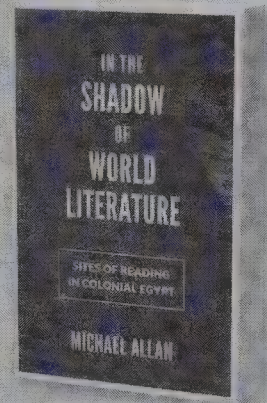
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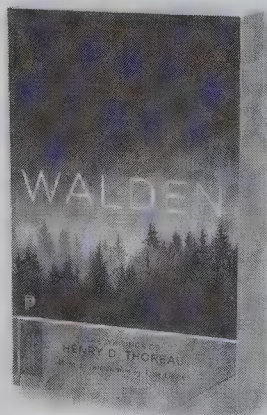
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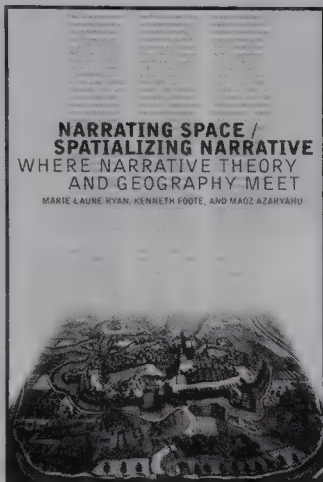
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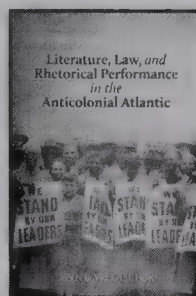
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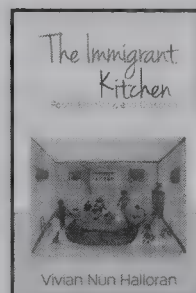
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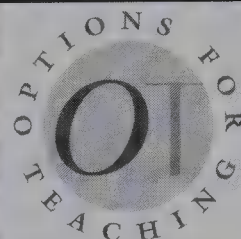
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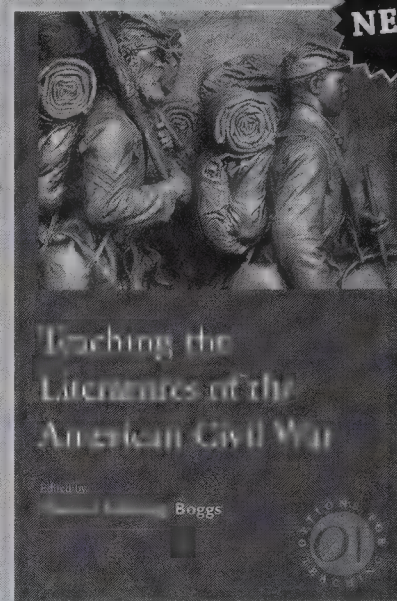
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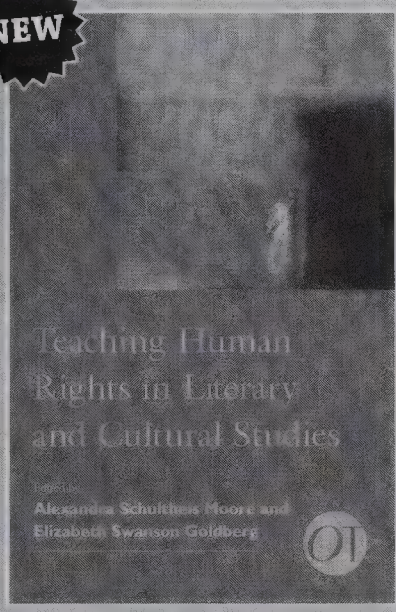
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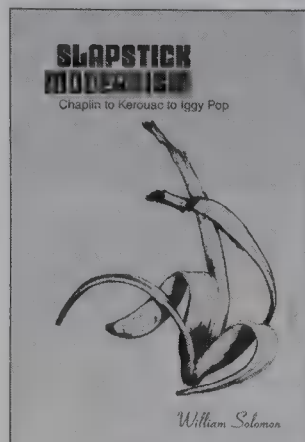
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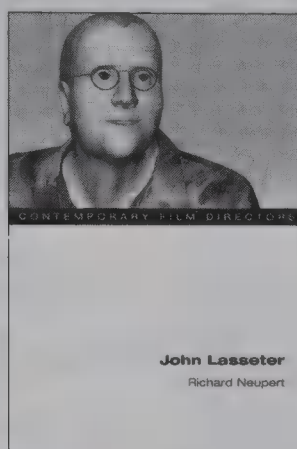
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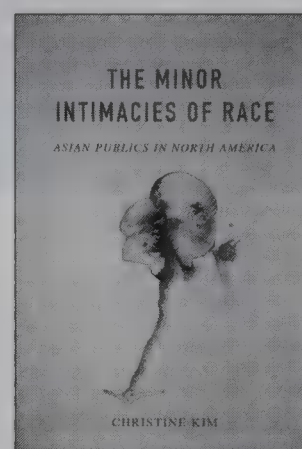
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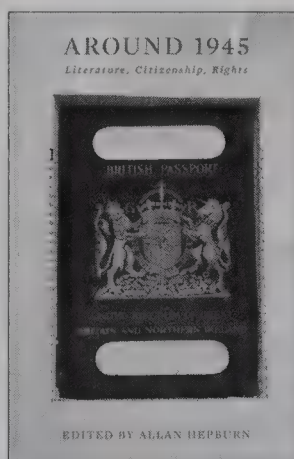
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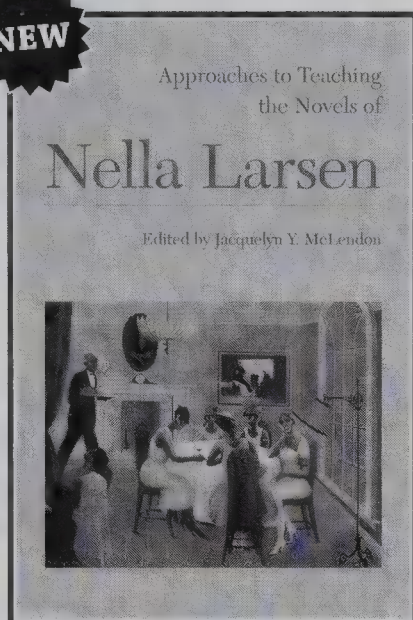
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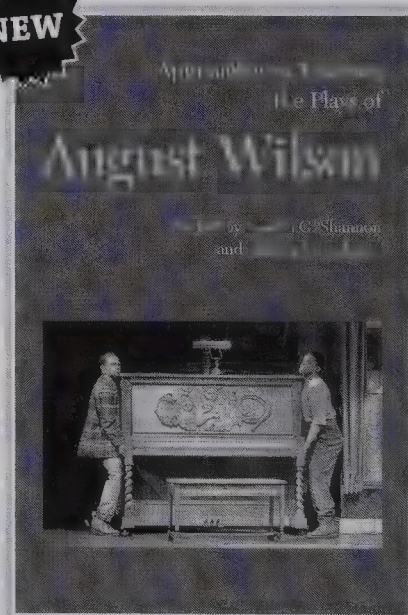
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Abstracts

603 Susan J. Wolfson, *Yeats's Latent Keats / Keats's Latent Yeats*

Keats's tracks into the nineteenth century angle toward a "modernism" often defined at his expense—yet with latent identifications. In relations of past and present, figural identifications may register in nuances different from conscious allusion or the psychodramas of influence, ravages and resistance, hauntings and felt belatedness that issue in self-interested misreadings. "Latent Keats" and "Latent Yeats" play into an important, underreported current in both Keats studies and Yeats studies: a "Long Romanticism" in intimate verbal figures that trouble any "Modernism" of definitional difference from "Romantic." Keats's writing harbors figures to which Yeats could respond, even correspond, vexed as he was by "Keats" as the name for the puerile outsider's dreamy sensuousness that a proper "modernist" needed to spurn. Such complication is one of the variable formations by which a "modernist" program manages to conjure the "Romantic" precedence it would supersede. (SJW)

622 Judith Brown, *Questions for R. K. Narayan*

R. K. Narayan's work has been faulted for its sidestepping of the brutal realities of colonial rule. Yet Narayan stages, in the dreaminess of his fictionalized township of Malgudi, the unwriting or undermining of the logics of language that subtend colonial rule. The author has fashioned a way to write about India that displays the vacuity of the colonial model of governance and, through his tales of failed authorship, points to something other. Emerging in his comic episodes and in his baffled protagonists is a recognition of the importance of keeping things unsettled, in suspension, or visible only in their negation. Narayan, this essay argues through a series of questions that underscore the uncertainty in his world, imagines passivity as an interruption of the progressive, purposive, and productive time that defines modernity. (JB)

636 Alix Beeston, *A "Leg Show Dance" in a Skyscraper: The Sequenced Mechanics of John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer**

Performing a historicized analysis of John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), this essay returns this understudied author to the center stage of modernist studies and includes the popular stage in accounts of the technologized mechanisms of modernist writing. By disclosing a deep correlation between the composite narrative tactics of Dos Passos's multilinear novel and the mass entertainments of this period, particularly Florenz Ziegfeld's annual Follies revues, it supplies new parameters for theorizing strategies of narration and characterization in modernist fiction vis-à-vis the technologies of popular entertainment and display in the early twentieth century. The discussion of Dos Passos's broad critique of the gendered specular economy of the modern metropolis in the era of Taylorism repositions his early writing as integral to the development of high modernism in the 1920s. (AB)

- 652 **Christopher J. Pexa**, *More Than Talking Animals: Charles Alexander Eastman's Animal Peoples and Their Kinship Critiques of United States Colonialism*

Red Hunters and the Animal People (1904), an early collection of stories for children by Charles Alexander Eastman, a Dakota author, was largely viewed by his critical contemporaries as a politically innocuous analogue to Kipling's *Jungle Book Stories*. Through consideration of the Dakota oral-historical genre of *hituŋkaŋkaŋpi* ("long ago stories") and of Dakota peoplehood more broadly, this article proposes an alternative view of Eastman as a resistance writer who cited a long-circulating Dakota kinship philosophy to criticize the enduring conditions of United States settler colonialism—a criticism that would become more pointed in his later, better-known autobiography, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1915). In viewing Eastman's animal tales as opposed to United States colonialism, we may see more clearly his innovative translations of Dakota politics into narratives that both appealed to and challenged United States settler society. These challenges were made in relation to Dakota conceptions of peoplehood, power, and gift. (CJP)

- 668 **Sebastian Lecourt**, *Idylls of the Buddh': Buddhist Modernism and Victorian Poetics in Colonial Ceylon*

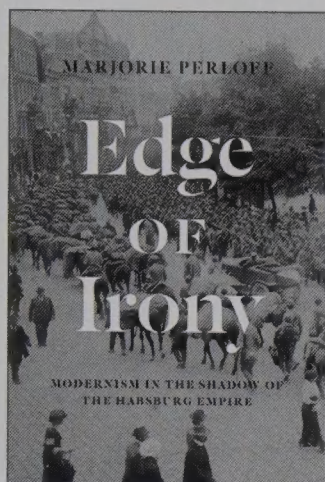
This essay explores how Edwin Arnold's epic poem *The Light of Asia* (1879) popularized a formal analogy between Buddhism and Christianity. The poem was based on a series of missionary texts that had reshaped the Buddha's career into a close approximation of Jesus's in order to frame Buddhism as a fit object of Protestant conversion. Early anglophone readers in Sri Lanka, however, took it as evidence of Buddhism's equal stature and thus helped make *The Light of Asia* an international best seller and a touchstone for popular Buddhist nationalisms in the twentieth century. In this way Arnold's poem allows us to develop a more complex sense both of how literary forms globalize—how a literary construct can take on global purchase precisely because readers disagree over its meaning—and of the powerful role that specific literary media play in influencing these different interpretations. (SL)

- 686 **Tiffany Tsao**, *Indigenous Agency and Compliance: Contemporary Literature about Dayaks*

Based on an analysis of three literary texts about Dayaks—the indigenous peoples of Kalimantan (Borneo) in Indonesia—this essay argues that strategic submission can play an important role in indigenous peoples' attempts to obtain and maintain agency under the shadow of dominant discourse. Discussions foundational to the field of postcolonial studies have tended to focus on the importance of subversion, resistance, and counterdiscourse in liberating the oppressed subject. Taking reading cues from anthropological and sociological accounts of Dayak compliance with various constructions of Dayaks, this essay looks at how the writing of literature about Dayaks (by both non-Dayaks and Dayaks) functions as an enactment of and meditation on the application of dominant discourse to indigenous peoples and the opportunities that such discourse affords for carving out spaces of autonomy. (TT)

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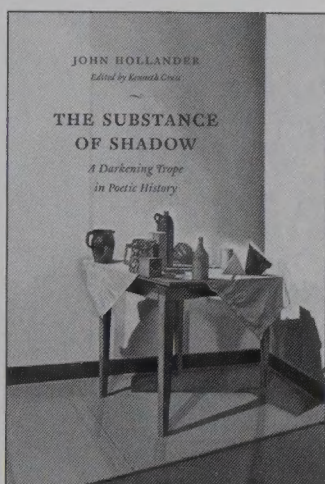
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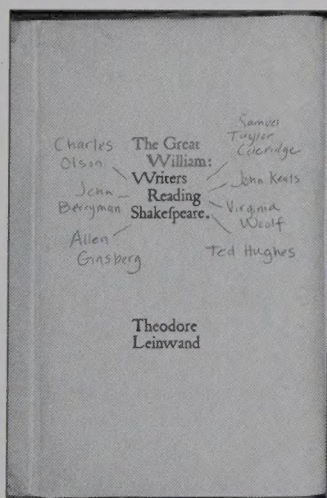
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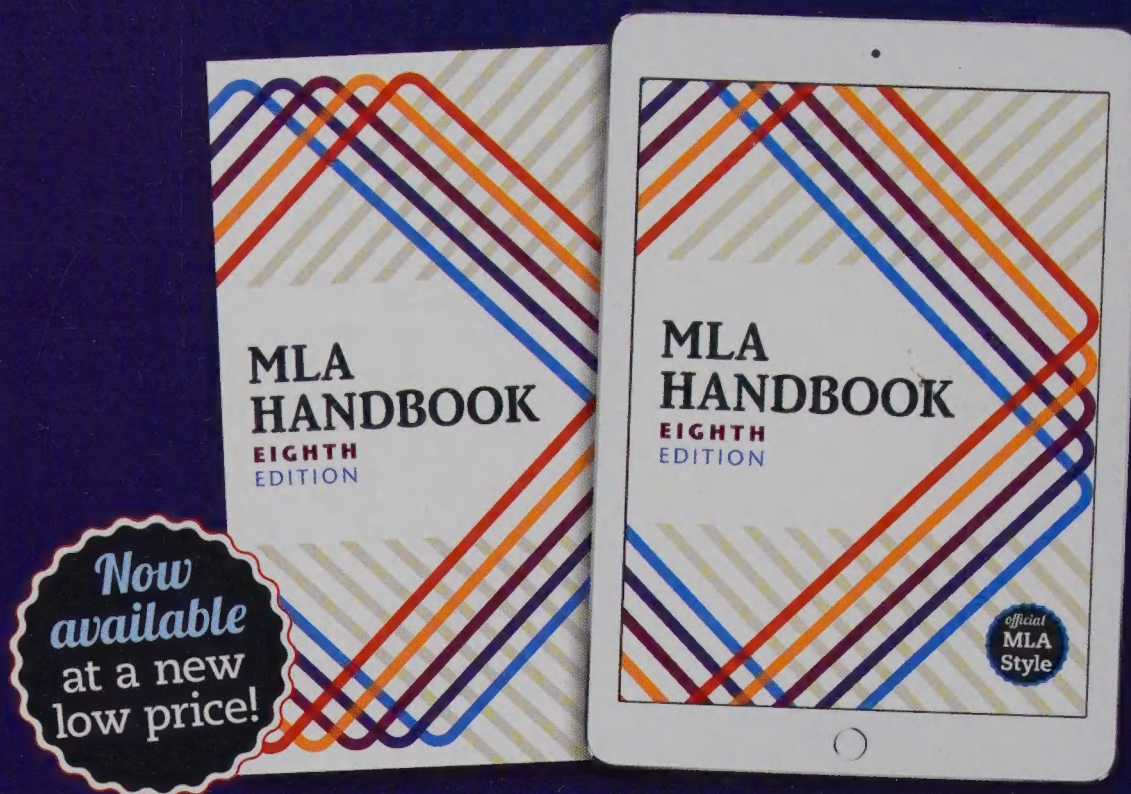
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